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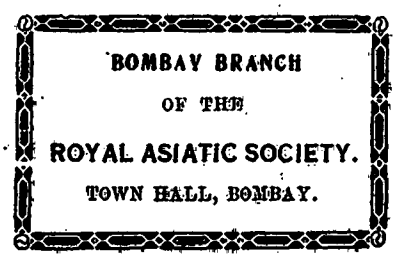

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X. e-24

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.

F. R. S.

E 4687 au 57

THE THIRD EDITION,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. V.

X. e. 24

Non fabula mendax
Ausa loqui de fonte tuo est: ubicunque videris,
Quaereris; et nulli contigit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo sit laeta suo; tua flumina prodam,
Quà Deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum
Te mihi nôsse dedit.

LUCAN.

X. e. 24

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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great man that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Wherever a victory is gained, there a church * is erected in the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings.—E.

my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed when the victories are over Christians.

The situation of a church is always chosen near running water, for the convenience of their purifications and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonnade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very small division answering to the holy of holies. This

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar

is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it. You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church; and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for 24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies (a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, are obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, unless in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes before your first entering the outer precinct; but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks before you come out of the church. At entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been always a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in the upper part of the wall. St George is generally

there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment, The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set of people would be more shamefully ignorant than

those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them.

The Arabic canon *, which is preserved by the Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1300, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians.

As the Abuna very seldom understands the language, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand, after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, "Let them be deacons." I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the church of St Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and blandishment of the cross, were as good deacons as the rest *.

The same is performed with regard to monks. A crowd of people, when he is riding, will assemble within 500 yards of him, and there begin a melancholy song. He asks, who these men with beards are? they tell him they want to be ordained monks. After the same sign of the cross, and three blasts with his mouth he orders them to be monks. But, in ordaining priests, they must be able to read a chapter of St Mark, which they do in a language he does not understand a word of. They then give the Abuna a brick of salt, to the value of perhaps sixpence, for their ordination; which, from their present given, the Jesuits maintained to be simoniacal.

The Itchegue is the chief of the monks in general, especially those of Debra Libanos. The head of the other monks, called those of St Eustathius, is the superior of the convent of Mahebar Selasse, on the N. W. corner of Abyssinia, near Kuara, and the Shangalla, towards Sennaar and the river Dender. All this tribe is grossly ignorant, and through time, I believe, will loss the use of letters entirely.

The Itchegue is ordained by two chief priests holding a white cloth, or veil, over him, while another says a prayer; and then they lay all their hands on his head, and join in psalms together. He is a man, in troublesome times, of much greater consequence than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests

* This ceremony is incredible, and merits inquiry from future travellers. Perhaps the Abuna's benediction has been mistaken by Mr Bruce for an ordination of deacons.—E.

and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them *.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have been inquired into and discussed with so much keenness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church, may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

* This remark is undoubtedly just. The Abuna is a mere nominal primate: But the Itchegué, and the monks of Debrulibanos, as also the monks of St Eustatéos have much influence, though their revenues and persons be in the hands of the king.—E.

Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This, for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

doctrines, and definitions of the time of St Athanasius, are all wrapt up in tenfold darkness, and inextricable from amidst the thick clouds of heresy and ignorance of language. Nature is often mistaken for person, and person for nature; the same of the human substance. It is monstrous to hear their reasoning upon it. One would think, that every different monk, every time he talks, purposely broaches some new heresy. Scarce one of them that ever I conversed with, and those of the very best of them, would suffer it to be said, that Christ's body was perfectly like ours. Nay, it was easily seen, that, in their hearts, they went still further, and were very loth to believe, if they did believe at all, that the body of the Virgin Mary and St Anne were perfectly human *.

Not to trouble the reader further with these uninteresting particulars and distinctions, I shall only add, that the Jesuits, in the account they give of the heresies, ignorance and obstinacy of the Abyssinian clergy, have not misrepresented them in the imputations made against them, either in point of faith or of morals. Whether, this being the case, the mission they undertook of themselves into that country, gave them authority to destroy the many with a view to convert the few, is a question to be resolved hereafter; I believe it did not; and that the tares and the wheat should have been suffered to grow together till a hand of more authority, guided by unerring judgment, pulled them, with that portion of safety he had pre-ordained for both.

The Protestant writers again unfairly triumph over their adversaries, the Catholics, by asking, Why all that noise about the two natures in Christ? It is plain, say they, from passages in the Haimanout Abou, and

* At this very time (1811), the kingdom is divided, and in arms, about these subtilities.—L.

their other tracts upon orthodox belief, that they acknowledge that Christ was perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting, and that all the confessions of unity, co-equality, and inferiority are there expressed in the clearest manner as received in the Greek church. What necessity was there for more; and what need of disputing upon these points, already so fully settled?

This, I beg leave to say, is unfair; for, though it is true, that, at the time of collecting the Haimanout Abou, and at the time when St Athanasius, St Cyril, and St Chrysostom wrote, the explanation of these points was uniform in favour of orthodoxy, and that while access could easily be had to Jerusalem or Alexandria, then Greek and Christian cities, difficulties, if any arose, were easily resolved; yet, at the time the Jesuits came, those books were very rare in the country, and the contents of them so far from being understood, that they were applied to the support of the grossest heresies, from the misinterpretation of the ignorant monks of these latter times. That the Abyssinians had been orthodox availed nothing: they were then become as ignorant of the doctrines of St Athanasius and St Cyril, as if those fathers had never wrote; and it is their religion at this period which the Jesuits condemn, not that of the church of Alexandria, when in its purity under the first patriarchs; and, to complete all their misfortunes, no access to Jerusalem is any longer open to them, and very rarely communication with Cairo.

On the other hand, the Jesuits, who found that the Abyssinians were often wrong in some things, were resolved to deny that they could be right in any thing; and, from attacking their tenets, they fell upon their ceremonies received in the Greek church at the same time with Christianity; and, in this dispute they

shewed great ignorance and malevolence, which they supported by the help of falsehood and invention.—I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour.

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot.

The small river, running beween the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some perhaps four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side

of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on together. The priests with the crosses returned, one of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup or chalice; when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hand, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste; after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier ybarak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses was then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them, not contented with aspersion, received the water in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and, after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing hallelujahs, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Janni, my Greek friend, had recommended me to the priest of Adowa; and, as the governor had placed me by him, I had an opportunity, for both these reasons, of being served among the first. My friend, the priest, sprinkled water upon my head, and gave me his blessing in the same words he had used to the others; but, as I saw it was not necessary to drink, I declined putting the cup to my lips, for two reasons; one, because I knew the Abyssinians have a scruple to eat or drink after strangers; the other, because I apprehended the water was not perfectly clean; for no sooner had the crosses first touched the pool, and the cup filled from the clean part for the governor, than

two or three hundred boys, calling themselves *deacons*, plunged in with only a white cloth, or rag, tied round their middle; in all other respects they were perfectly naked. All their friends and relations (indeed every body) went close down to the edge of the pool, where water was thrown upon them, at first decently enough, by boys of the town, and those brought on purpose as deacons; but, after the better sort of people had received the aspersion, the whole was turned into a riot, the boys, muddying the water, threw it round them upon every one they saw well-dressed or clean. The governor retreated first, then the monks, and then the crosses, and left the brook in possession of the boys and blackguards, who rioted there till two o'clock in the afternoon.

I must, however, observe, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. I saw no women in the bath uncovered, even to the knee; nor did I see any person of the rank of decent servants go into the water at all, except with the horses. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

I saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous*, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compli-

* Prince of Shoa, often spoken of in the sequel.

ment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same time, but offering him no more water.

I shall now state, in his own words, the account given of this by Alvarez, chaplain to the Portuguese embassy, under Don Roderigo de Lima.

The king had invited Don Roderigo de Lima, the Portuguese ambassador, to be present at the celebration of the festival of the Epiphany. They went about a mile and a half from their former station, and encamped upon the side of a pond, which had been prepared for the occasion. Alvarez says, that, in their way, they were often asked by those they met or overtook, "Whether or not they were going to be baptized?" to which the chaplain and his company answered in the negative, as having been already once baptized in their childhood.

"In the night," says he, "a great number of priests assembled about the pond, roaring and singing with a view of blessing the water. After midnight the baptism began. The Abuna Mark, the king and queen, were the first that went into the lake; they had each a piece of cotton cloth about their middle, which was just so much more than the rest of the people had. At the sun-rising the baptism was most thronged; after which, when Alvarez* came, the lake was full of holy water, into which they had poured oil."

It should seem, from this outset of his narrative, that he was not at the lake till the ceremony was half over, and did not see the benediction of the water at all, nor the curious exhibition of the King, Queen, and Abuna, and their cotton cloths. As for the circumstance of the oil being poured into the water, I

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* Vide Alvarez's narrative in his account of the embassy of Don Roderigo de Lima, page 155.

will not positively contradict it; for, though I was early there, it might have escaped me if it was done [illegible] dark. However, I never heard it mentioned [illegible] of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing-gown, especially as it was frost.

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptisma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi, p. 254.

to do in it? Sure they had neither apostatized, nor was the company of apostates a very creditable society for them.

Alvarez, to persuade us this is real baptism, says that oil was thrown into the pond before he came. He will not charge himself with having seen this, and it is probably a falsehood. But he knew it was an essential in baptism in all the churches in the East; so indeed is salt, which he should have said was here used likewise; then he would have had all the materials of Greek baptism; and this salt might have contributed to cooling the water, that had frozen under the rays of a burning sun.

Alvarez must have seen, that not only men and women go to be washed in the pool, but horses, cows, mules, and a prodigious number of asses. Are these baptised? I would wish to know the formula the reverend baptist-general used on their occasion.

There is but one church where I ever saw sacred rites, or something like baptism, conferred upon asses; it is, I think, at Rome, on St Andrew's or St Patrick's day. It should be St Balaam's if he was in the Roman kalendar as high as he is in the Abyssinian. In that church (it is, I think, on Monte Cavallo) all sorts of asses, about and within Rome, are gathered together, and showers of holy water and blessings rained by a priest upon them. What is the formula I do not know; although it is a joke put upon strangers, especially of one nation, to assemble them there; or whether the two churches of Rome and Abyssinia differ so much in this as in other points of discipline, I am not informed; but the rationality and decency of such a ceremony being the same in all churches, the service performed at the time should be the same likewise.

I will not then have any scruple to say, that this whole account of Alvarez is a gross fiction; that no baptism, or any thing like baptism, is meant by the ceremony; that a man is no more baptised by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism, than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion. The commemoration of our Saviour's baptism on the epiphany, and the blessing the waters that day, is an old observance of the eastern church, formerly performed in public in Egypt, as now in Ethiopia. Since that of Alexandria fell into the hands of Mahometans, the fear of insult and profanation has obliged them to confine this ceremony, and all other processions, within the walls of their churches, in each of which there is constantly a place devoted to this use. Those that cannot attend the ceremony of aspersion in the church, especially sick or infirm people, have the water sent to them, and a large contribution is made for the patriarch, or bishop; yet nobody ever took it into their heads to tax either Greek or Armenian with a repetition of baptism.

Mounsieur de Tournefort *, in his Travels through the Levant, gives you a figure of the Greek priest, who blesses the water in a peculiar habit, with a pastoral staff in his hand.

But, besides this, various falsehoods have likewise been propagated about the manner of baptism practised in Abyssinia; all in order to impugn the validity of it, and to excuse the rash conduct of the Jesuits for re-baptising all the Abyssinians, as if they had been a Jewish and Pagan people that never had been baptised at all. The violation of this article of the creed, or confession of Nice, was a cause of great offence to the

* Tournef. tom. i. p. 111.

Abyssinians, and of the misfortunes that happened afterwards. The whole of the Abyssinian service of baptism is in their liturgy. The Jesuits had plenty of copies in their hands, and could have pointed out the part of the service that was heretical, if they had pleased; they did not pretend, however, to do this, and their silence condemns them.

As for the idle stories that are told of the words pronounced, such as,—"I baptise you in the name of the Holy Trinity,"—"In the name of Peter and Paul,"—"I baptise you in the water of Jordan,"—"May God baptise you,"—"May God wash you," and many others, they are all invented by the Jesuits, to excuse the repetition of baptism in Abyssinia, which there was no sort of occasion for, as they might have examined the words and form in the liturgies, which are in every church; and I must here only observe, that if, as the chaplain Alvarez says, the priest in the pool, on the festival of the Epiphany, was so fond of the proper words as even at that time to say, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the words he quotes to shew that this immersion in water on the Epiphany is a real baptism, I cannot comprehend why they should vary them to other words, when nothing but baptism is meant. But this I can bear evidence of, that, in no time when I was present, as I have above a hundred times been, at the baptism both of adults and infants, aye, and of apostates too, I never heard other words pronounced than the orthodox baptismal ones, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," immerging the child in pure water, into which they first pour a small quantity of oil of olives, in the form of a cross.

The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself.

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre.

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table.

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which the communicant drinks a large draught; and well he needs it to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division, upon which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private, says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

The Romanists doubt of the validity of the Abyssinian consecration of the elements; because in their liturgy it is plainly said, "Lord, put thy hand upon this cup, and bless it, and sanctify it, and purify it, that in it may be made thy holy blood;" and of the bread they say, "Bless this saucer, or plate, that in it may be made thy holy body." And in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy pure body which is joined with this cup of thy precious blood." The Jesuits doubt of the validity of this consecration, because it is said, "this *bread* is my body;" and over the wine, "this *cup* is my blood;" whereas, to operate a true transubstantiation, they should say over the bread, "this is my body."

For my own part, I leave it to the reverend fathers, who are the best judges, what is necessary to operate this miracle of transubstantiation. The reality of the thing itself, is denied by all Protestant churches, has been often doubted by others, has been ridiculed by lay-writers, and can never be a matter, I believe, of thorough conviction, much less of proof, to any. The dignity of the subject, on which it touches nearly, as well as tenderness for our brethren on the continent, an article of whose faith it is, should always screen it from being treated with pleasantry, whatever we believe, or whether we believe it or not.

M. Ludolf thinks, that the words I have set down are a proof the Abyssinians do not believe in transub-

stantiation. For my part, from those very words, I cannot think any thing is clearer than that they do; the bread is upon the plate; they pray that the plate may be blessed, "That in it the bread may be made God's holy body *;" and of the wine they say, "That it may be made thy holy blood:" and in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy body; and again, "May the Holy Ghost shine upon this bread, that it may be made the body of Christ our God, and that this cup may be changed and become the blood, not the *symbol*, of the blood of Christ our God." With all respect to Mr Ludolf's opinion, I must think that, though the benediction prayed upon the patine, spoon, and chalice, is but an awkward expression, yet, if I understand the language, *converte* and *immutetur* are literal translations of the Ethiopic, and seem to pray for a transubstantiation as directly as words will admit, whether they believe in it or not; nor, as far as I know, can any stronger or more expressive be found to substitute in their place.

I shall finish this subject (which is not in my province, and which I have mentioned, because I know it is a matter which some of my readers desire information upon) by an anecdote that happened a few months before my coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told me by the priest of Adowa the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday before Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him, that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down

* See the Ethiopic liturgies passim. Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 5.

and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service till the end, treading that grass under foot.

This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged I would give him my opinion what he should have done, or rather, what would have been done in my country? I told him, "That the answer to his question depended upon two things, which, being known, his difficulties would very easily be solved. If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trod under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you was guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you, and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it, or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe (as many Christian churches do), that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ's blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards, having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish

that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O Lord! our father Antonios, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia.

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula-

tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circumcision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation anywhere: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22

tended the mere seeing that part of the body of a parent, and not instantly throwing a covering over it.

I do not propose discussing at large the arguments for or against the time of the beginning to circumcise. The Scripture has given such an account of it, that, when weighed with the promise so exactly kept to the end, seems to me to be a very rational one. But, considering all revelation out of the question. I think there is no room to institute any free or fair inquiry. I give no pre-eminence to Moses, nor his writings. I suppose him a profane author; but, till those that argue against his account, and maintain circumcision was earlier than Abraham, shall shew me another profane writer as old as Moses, as near the time they say it began as Moses was to the time of Abraham, I will not argue with them in support of Moses against Herodotus, nor discuss who Herodotus's Phœnicians, and who his Egyptians were, that circumcised. Herodotus knew not Abraham nor Moses, and, compared to their days, he is but as yesterday. Those Phœnicians and Egyptians might, for any thing he knew at his time, have received circumcision from Abraham or Ishmael, or some of their posterity, as the Abyssinians or Ethiopians, whom he refers to, actually say they did, which Herodotus did not know, it is plain, though he mentions they were circumcised. This tradition of the Abyssinians merits some consideration from what they say of it themselves, that they were, in the earliest time, circumcised before they left their native country, and settled in Tigre. From this they derive no honour, nor do they pretend to any. It would have been otherwise, if the era fixed upon had been the reign of Menilek, son of Solomon, when they first embraced Judaism under a monarch. This would have made a much more brilliant epoch in their history, whilst it was probable, that they adopted circumcision under

the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah*, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham†, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

private family in a few years numerous like the sand of the sea. This mark, which separated them from all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo* says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 950

jected particular people to, in particular climates and countries.

We perceive among the brutes, that Nature, creating the animal with the same limbs, or members, all the world over, does yet indulge itself in a variety, in the proportion of such limbs, or members. Some are remarkable for the size of their heads, some for the breadth and bigness of the tail, some for the length of their legs, and some for the size of their horns*. There is a district in Abyssinia, within the perpetual rains, where cows, of no greater size than ours, have horns, each of which would contain as much water as the ordinary water-pail used in England does; and I remember, on the frontiers of Sennaar, near the river Dender, to have seen a herd of many hundred cows, every one of which had the apparent construction of their parts almost similar with that of the bull; so that, for a considerable time, I was persuaded that these were oxen, their udders being very small, until I had seen them milked.

This particular appearance, or unnecessary appendage, at first made me believe that I had found the real cause of circumcision from analogy; but, upon information, this did not hold. It is, however, otherwise in the excision of women. From climate, or some other cause, a certain disproportion is found generally to prevail among them. And, as the population of a country has, in every age, been considered as an object worthy of attention, men have endeavoured to remedy this deformity by the amputation of that redundancy. All the Egyptians, therefore, the Arabians, and nations to the south of Africa, the Abyssinians, Gallas, Agows, Gafats, and Gongas, make

* Some of these large horns are in Mr Bruce's collection of natural history, &c. at Kinnaird.—E.

their children undergo this operation, at no fixed time indeed, but always before they are marriageable.

When the Roman Catholic priests first settled in Egypt, they did not neglect supporting their mission by temporal advantages, and small presents given to needy people, their proselytes; but mistaking this excision of the Coptish women for a ceremony performed upon Judaical principles, they forbade, upon pain of excommunication, that excision should be performed upon the children of parents who had become Catholics. The converts obeyed, the children grew up, and arrived at puberty; but the consequences of having obeyed the interdict were, that the man found, by choosing a wife among Catholic Cophts, he subjected himself to a very disagreeable inconveniency, to which he had conceived an unconquerable aversion; and therefore he married a heretical wife, free from this objection, and with her he relapsed into heresy.

The missionaries, therefore, finding it impossible that ever their congregation could increase, and that this accident frustrated their labours, laid their case before the college of Cardinals *de propaganda fide*, at Rome. These took it up as a matter of moment, which it really was, and sent over visitors skilled in surgery, fairly to report upon the case as it stood. They, on their return, declared, that the heat of the climate, or some other natural cause, did, in that particular nation, invariably alter the formation, so as to make a difference from what was ordinary in the sex in other countries; and that this difference did occasion a disgust, which must impede the consequences for which matrimony was instituted. The college, upon this report, ordered that a declaration, being first made by the patient and her parents, that it was not done from Judaical intention, but because it disappointed the ends of marriage, "Si modo matrimonii fructus impediret id omnino tollendum esset:" that

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *.

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains.

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year.

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Grecks, Epagomeni, which signifies days

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* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

added, or superinduced, to complete a sum. The Abyssinians add five days which they call Quagomi, a corruption from the Greek Epagomeni, to the month of August, which is their Nahaasse. Every fourth year they add a sixth day. They begin the year, like all the eastern nations, on the 29th or 30th day of August, that is, the kalends of September, the 29th of August being the first of their month Mascaram.

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month, among the old Egyptians, has continued to this day. It is Tot; probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The common epoch which the Abyssinians make use of, is from the creation of the world; but in the quantity of this period they do not agree with the Greeks, nor with other eastern nations, who reckon 5508 years from the creation to the birth of Christ. The Abyssinians adopt the even number of 5500 years, casting away the odd eight years; but whether this was first done for ease of calculation, or some better reason, there is neither book nor tradition that now can teach us. They have, besides this, many other epochs, such as from the councils of Nice and Ephesus. There is likewise to be met with in their books a portion of time, which is certainly a cycle; the Ethiopic word is kamar, which, literally interpreted, is an arch, or circle. It is not now in use in civil life among the Abyssinians, and therefore was mentioned as containing various quantities, from 100 years to 19;

and there are places in their history where neither of these will apply, nor any even number whatever.

They constantly make use of the golden number and epact in all their ecclesiastic computations: the first they call Matque, the other Abacte. Scaliger, who has taken great pains upon this confused subject, the computation of time in the church of Abyssinia, without having succeeded in making it much clearer, tells us, that the first use or invention of epacts was not earlier than the time of Dioclesian; but this is contrary to the positive evidence of Abyssinian history, which says expressly, that the epact was invented by Demetrius *, patriarch of Alexandria. "Unless," says the poet in their liturgy, "Demetrius had made this revelation by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, how, I pray you, was it possible that the computation of time, called Epacts, could ever have been known?" And, again, "When you meet," says he, "you shall learn the computation by epacts, which was taught by the Holy Ghost to father Demetrius, and by him revealed to you." Now Demetrius was the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, who was elected about the 190th year of Christ, or in the reign of the emperor Severus; consequently long before the time of Dioclesian.

It seems the reputation of the Egyptians had, from very old time, for their skill in computation and the division of time, remained with them late in the days of Christianity. Pope Leo the Great, writing to the emperor Marcian, confesses that the fixing the time of the moveable feasts was always an exclusive privilege of the church of Alexandria; and, therefore,

* Encom. 12th October, Od. 3. tom. 1. Ann. Alexan. p. m. 363.

says he, in his letter about reforming the kalendar, the holy fathers endeavoured to take away the occasion of this error, by delegating the whole care of this to the bishop of Alexandria; because the Egyptians, from old times, seem to have had this gift of computation given them; and when these had signified to the apostolic See the days upon which the moveable feasts were to happen, the church of Rome then notified this by writing to churches at a greater distance.

We are not to doubt that this privilege, which the church of Alexandria had been so long in possession of, contributed much to inflame the minds of the Abyssinians against the Roman Catholic priests, for altering the time of keeping Easter, by appointing days of their own; for we see violent commotions to have arisen every year upon the celebration of this festival.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year while the gospel of St Matthew was yet reading in the churches *.

They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary, irregular manner. The twilight, as I have before observed, is very short, almost imperceptible, and was

* This is not correct, at least with regard to written history; for whatever books they read in the quarters, it is uniformly the practice to denote the whole year by the name of an evangelist. The days of Matthew make one year, the days of Mark a second, of Luke and John a third and fourth, and so on in rotation. The four evangelists make a period of four complete years.—E.

still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it Nagge, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night; and Meset is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called Kater, a very old word, which signifies culmination, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All the rest of times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun then was, when what they are describing happened.

I shall conclude what further I have to say on this subject, by observing, that nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. I have already observed, that the beginning of our years are different; ours begin on the 1st of January, and theirs on the first day of September, so that there are 8 months difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an

equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned, This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference above three years; a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

However, it will occur, that even this agreement is no positive evidence of the exactness of the time; for it may so happen that the sum-totals may agree, and yet every particular sum constituting the whole may be false; that is, if the quantity of errors which are too much exactly correspond with the quantity of errors that are too little. To obviate this as much as possible, I have considered three eclipses of the sun, as recorded in the Abyssinian annals. The first was in the reign of David III. the year before the king marched out to his first campaign against Maffudi the Moor, in the unfortunate war with Adel. The year that the king marched into Dawaro was 1526, after having dispatched the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, who embarked at Masuah on the 26th of April on board the fleet commanded by Don Hector de Silveyra; and the Abyssinian annals say, that, the year before the king marched, a remarkable eclipse of the sun had happened in the Ethiopic month Ter. Now, in consulting our European accounts, we find that, on the second of January, answering to the 18th day of Ter, there did happen an eclipse of the sun, which, as it was in the time of the year when the sky is cloudless both night and day, must have been visible all the time of its duration. So here our accounts do agree precisely.

The second happened on the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, as the Abyssinian account states it. Claudius succeeded to the crown in 1540, and the 13th year of his reign will fall to be in 1553. Now we find this eclipse did happen in the same clear season of the year, that is, on the 24th of January 1553; so, in this second instance, our chronology is perfectly correct.

The third eclipse of the sun happened in the 7th year of the reign of Yasous II., in Magabit, the seventh month of the Abyssinians. Now Yasous came to the crown in 1729, so that the 7th year of his reign will be in 1736, and on the 4th day of October, answering to the 8th day of the month Tekemt, N. S. In that year, we see this eclipse observed in Europe.

As a further confirmation of this, we have stated the particulars of a comet which, the Abyssinian annals say, appeared at Gondar in the month of November, in the 9th year of the reign of Yasous I.; and as this comet was observed in Europe to have come to its perihelion in December 1689, and as that year, according to our account, was really the 9th of that king's reign, no further proof of the exactness of our chronology can possibly be required. By means of these observations, counting backward to the time of Icon Amlac, and again forward to the death of Joas, which happened in 1768, and assigning to each prince the number of years that his own historians say he reigned, I have, in the most unexceptionable manner that I can devise, settled the chronology of this country; and the exact agreement it has with all the remarkable events, regularly and sufficiently vouched, plainly shews the accuracy of this method. If, therefore, in a few cases, I differ two or three years from the Jesuits in their first account of this country, I do not in any shape believe the fault to be mine; be-

cause there are, at all these periods, errors in point of fact, both in Alvarez and Tellez, much more material and unaccountable than the mistake of a few years; and these errors have been adopted with great confidence in the Hispania Illustrata, and some of the best books of Portuguese history which have made mention of this country.

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK VI.

FIRST ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE NILE FRUSTRATED—A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY THITHER, WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF EVERY THING RELATING TO THAT CELEBRATED RIVER.

CHAP. I.

The Author made Governor of Ras el Feel.

I soon received an instance of kindness from Ayo Confu, which gave me great pleasure on several accounts. On the south part of Abyssinia, on the frontiers of Sennaar, is a hot, unwholesome, low strip of country, inhabited entirely by Mahometans, divided into several small districts, known by the genral

name of Mazaga. Of this I have often before spoken, and shall have further occasion in the sequel.

The Arabs of Sennaar, that are on bad terms with the governor of Atbara, fly hither across the desert to avoid the rapine and violence of that cruel tyrant. The arrival of these produces in an instant the greatest plenty at Ras el Feel; markets are held everywhere; cattle of all kinds, milk, butter, elephants teeth, hides, and several other commodities, are sold to a great amount.

The Arabs are of many different tribes; the chief are the Daveina, then the Nilé. These, besides getting a good market, and food for their cattle and protection for themselves, have this great additional advantage, they escape the fly, and consequently are not pillaged, as the rest of the Arabs in Atbara are, when changing abodes to avoid the havock made by that insect. In return for this, they constantly bring horses from Atbara, below Sennaar, for the king's own use, and for such of his cavalry who are armed with coats of mail; no Abyssinian horse, or very few at least, being capable of that burden.

Ayto Confu had many districts of land from his father Kasmati Netcho, as well as some belonging to his mother Ozoro Esther, which lay upon that frontier; it was called Ras el Feel, and had a sendick and nagareet, but, as it was governed always by a deputy who was a Mahometan, it had no rank among the great governments of the state. Besides these lands, the patrimony of Confu, Ras Michael had given him more, and with them this government, young as he was, from favour to his mother Ozoro Esther. This Mahometan deputy was named Abdel Jelleel, a great coward, who had refused to bring out his men, though summoned, to join the king when marching against Fasi. He had also quarrelled with the Daveina, and

robbed them, so that they traded no more with Ras el Feel, brought no more horses, and the district was consequently nearly ruined; whilst a great outcry was raised against Abdel Jelleel by the merchants who used to trade at that market, not having now money enough to pay the meery.

Ammonios, his Billetana Gueta, was the person Ayto Confu had destined to go to Ras el Feel to reduce it to order, and displace Abdel Jelleel; but Ras Michael had put him as a man of trust over the black horse under me, so he was employed otherwise. Confu himself was now preparing to go thither to settle another deputy in the place of Abdel Jelleel, and he had asked the assistance of troops from the king, by which this came to my knowledge.

The first time I saw Ozoro Esther, I told her, that unless she had a mind to have her son die speedily, she should, by every means in her power, dissuade him from his journey to Ras el Feel, being a place where the bloody flux never ceased to rage; and this complaint had never perfectly left him since he had had the small-pox, but had wore him to a shadow. There could be no surer way therefore of destroying him than letting him go thither as he proposed. He had been for some time indeed taking bark, which had done him great service. His mother Ozoro Esther, the Iteghe, whose first favourite he was, and all his friends, now took the alarm, upon which the Ras forbade him positively to go.

Negade Ras Mahomet, of whom we have already spoken, brother to Hagi Saleh, who had procured me my first lodging at Gondar, was head of all the Mahometans in that capital, nay I may say in Abyssinia. He, too, was a favourite of the Ras, and shewed the same attachment to me, on account of Metical Aga, as had his brother Saleh. This man came to me one

morning, and told me, that Yasine, whom I had brought with me to Abyssinia, and was recommended to me by Metical Aga, had married Abdel Jelleel's daughter, and that a son of Saleh had married a daughter of Yasine's. He said there was not a man in Abyssinia that was a braver soldier and better horseman than Yasine; that he had no love for money, but was a man of probity and honour, as indeed I had always found him; that the people of Ras el Feel, to a man, wished to have him for their governor in the room of Abdel Jelleel; and that all the Arabs, as well as Shekh Fidele, governor of Atbara, for Sennaar, wished the same.

Mahomet did not dare to speak for fear of Ozoro Esther, who was thought to favour Abdel Jelleel; but he promised, that if Ayto Confu would appoint Yasine instead of Abdel Jelleel, he would give him 50 ounces of gold, besides what Yasine should allow upon his settlement, and would manage the affair with Michael when he had leave so to do. He added, that his brother Saleh should furnish Yasine with 200 men from the Mahometans at Gondar, completely armed with their firelocks, and commanded by young Saleh in person.

I was not at this time any judge of the expediency of the measure; but one resolution I had made, and determined to keep, that I never would accept a post or employment for myself, or solicit any such for others. My reader will see, that, for my own safety, most unwillingly I had been obliged to break the first of these resolutions almost as soon as it was formed; and I was now deliberating, whether it was not better that I should break the other for the same reason. Two things weighed with me extremely; the experience of Yasine's prudence and attachment to me during the whole journey, and my determination to re-

turn by Sennaar, and never trust myself more in the hands of that bloody assassin the Naybe of Masuah, who I understood had, at several times, manifested his bad intentions towards me when I should return by that island.

I flattered myself, that great advantage would accrue to me by Yasine's friendship with the Arabs and the Shekh of Atbara; and, having consulted Ayto Aylo first, I made him propose it to Ozoro Esther. I found, upon speaking to that princess, that there was something embroiled in the affair. She did not answer directly, as usual, and I apprehended that the objection was to Yasine. I was no longer in doubt of this, when Ozoro Esther told me Abba Salama had strongly espoused the cause of Abdel Jelleel, who had bribed him. Notwithstanding this, I resolved to mention it myself to Confu, that I might have it in my power to know where the objection lay, and give a direct answer to Yasine.

I saw Confu soon after at Koscam. His bark being exhausted, I brought him more, and he seemed to be much better, and in great spirits. The time was favourable in all its circumstances, and I entered into the matter directly. I was very much surprised to hear him say, gravely, and without hesitation, "I have as good an opinion of Yasine as you can have; and I have as bad a one of Abdel Jelleel as any man in Gondar; for which, too, I have sufficient reason, as it is but lately the king told me, peevishly enough, I did not look to my affairs (whic 's true), as he understood that the district was ruined by having been neglected. But I am no longer governor of Ras el Feel; I have resigned it. I hope they will appoint a wiser and better man; let him choose for his deputy Yasine, or who else he pleases; for I have sworn by

the head of the Iteghe, I will not meddle, or make, with the government of Ras el Feel more."

Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, came in at that instant with a number of other people. I wanted to take Confu aside to ask him further, if he knew who this governor was; but he shuffled among the crowd, saying, "My mother will tell you all; the man, who is appointed, is your friend, and I think Yasine may be the deputy." I now lost no time in going to Ozoro Esther to intercede for the government of Ras el Feel to Yasine.

Among the crowd I met first Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, who, taking me by the hand, said with a laughing countenance, "O ho, I wish you joy! this is like a man; you are now no stranger, but one of us; why was not you at court?" I said, I had no particular business there, but that I came hither to see Ayto Confu, that he might speak in favour of Yasine to get him appointed deputy of Ras el Feel. "Why don't you appoint him yourself?" says he; "what has Confu to do with the affair now? You don't intend always to be in leading strings? You may thank the king for yourself, but I would never advise you to speak one word of Yasine to him; it is not the custom; you may, if you please, to Confu, he knows him already. His estate lies all around you, and he will enforce your orders if there should be any need."

"Pardon me, Tecla Mariam," said I, "if I do not understand you. I came here to solicit for Yasine, that Confu, or his successor, would appoint him their deputy, and you answer, that you advise me to appoint him myself." "And so I do," replies Tecla Mariam: "Who is to appoint him but you? You are governor of Ras el Feel; are you not?" I stood motionless with astonishment. "It is no great affair,"

says he, "and I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans; but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever. I wish it had been Begemder, with all my heart, but there is a good time coming."

After having recovered myself a little from my surprise, I went to Ayto Confu to kiss his hand as my superior, but this he would, by no means, suffer me to do. A great dinner was provided us by the Iteghe; and Yasine being sent for, was appointed, clothed, that is, invested, and ordered immediately to Ras el Feel to his government, to make peace with the Davina, and bring all the horses he could get with him from thence, or from Atbara. I sent there also that poor man, who had given us the small blue beads on the road, as I have already mentioned. The having thus provided for those two men, and secured, as I thought, a retreat to Sennaar for myself, gave me the first real pleasure that I had received since landing at Masuah; and that day, in company with Heikel, Tecla Mariam, Engedan, Aylo, and Guebra Denghel, all my great friends, and the hopes of this country, I, for the first time since my arrival in Abyssinia, abandoned myself to joy.

My constitution was, however, too much weakened to bear any excesses. The day after, when I went home to Enfras, I found myself attacked with a slow fever; and, thinking that it was the prelude of an ague, with which I was often tormented, I fell to taking bark, without any remission, or where the remission was very obscure, I shut myself up in the house, upon my constant regimen of boiled rice, with abundant draughts of cold water *.

* There is a slight inversion in the order of this incident, with regard to time, as it must have happened after the journey to Enfras, p. 64.—E.

I was, at this time, told, that there was a great commotion at Gondar; that a monk of Debra Libanos, a favourite of the Iteghe and of the king, too, had excommunicated Abba Salama in a dispute about religion at the Itchegue's house; and, the day after, Hagi Mahomet, one of Ras Michael's tent-makers, who lived in the town below, through which the high road from Gojam passes, came to tell me, that many monks from Gojam had passed through the low town, and expressed themselves very much dissatisfied by hearing that a Frank (meaning me) was in the town above. He said, that when they came in sixes and sevens at a time there was no fear; but when they returned altogether (as Michael sometimes made them do), they were like so many madmen; therefore if I resolved to stay at Emfras, he wished I would order him to send me some Mahometan soldiers, who would strictly act as I commanded them

At the same time I received news that my great friend, Tecla Mariam, and his daughter of the same name, the most beautiful woman in Abyssinia after Ozoro Esther, were both ill at Gondar. There needed no more for me to repair instantly thither. I muffled my head up, as great officers generally do, when riding near the capital. I passed at different times above twenty of these fanatics on the road, six and seven together; but either they did not know me, or, at least, if they did, they did not say any thing; I came to Ayto Aylo's, who was sitting, complaining of sore eyes, with the queen's chamberlain, Ayto Heikel.

After the usual salutation, I asked Aylo what was the matter in town? and if it was true that Sebaat Gzier had excommunicated Abba Salama? and told him that I had conceived these disputes about faith had been long ago settled. He answered, with an affected gravity, "That it was not so; that this was of

such importance, that he doubted it would throw the country into great convulsions; and he would not advise me to be seen in the street." "Tell me, I beseech you," said I, "what it is about. I hope not the old story of the Franks?" "No, no," says he; "a great deal worse than that; it is about Nebuchadnezzar:"—and he broke into a violent agony of laughter. "The monk of Debra Libanos says, that Nebuchadnezzar is a saint; and Abba Salama says, that he was a Pagan, Idolater, and a Turk, and that he is burning in hell fire with Dathan and Abiram." "Very well," said I, "I cannot think he was a Mahometan, if he was a Pagan and Idolater; but I am sure I shall make no enemies upon this dispute." "You are deceived," says he; "unless you tell your opinion in this country, you are reckoned an enemy to both parties. Stay, therefore, all night, and do not appear on the streets;" and, upon my telling him I was going to Tecla Mariam's, who was ill, he rose with me to go thither; for the strictest friendship subsisted between them. We met there with Ozoro Esther, who was visiting the beautiful Tecla Mariam in her indisposition. Seeing Aylo, Heikel, and me together at that time of night, she insisted that the young lady and I should be married, and she declared roundly she would see it done before she left the house. As neither of my patients were very ill, a great deal of mirth followed. Ozoro Esther sat late; there was no occasion for the compliment of seeing her home, as she had above three hundred men with her.

After she was gone, the whole discourse turned upon religion, what we believed, or did not believe, in our country; and this continued till day-light, when we all agreed to take a little sleep, then breakfast, and go to court. We did so, but Aylo went to Koscam, and Tecla Mariam to the Ras, so I met none of them with the king. When I went in, he was hearing a plead-

ing upon a cause of some consequence, and paying great attention. One of the parties had finished, the other was replying with a great deal of graceful action, and much energy and eloquence. They were bare down to their very girdle, and seemed rather prepared for boxing than for speaking.

This being over, the room was cleared, and I made my prostration. "I do demand of you," says the king abruptly, "Whether Nebuchadnezzar is a saint, or no?" I bowed, saying, "Your Majesty knows I am no judge of these matters, and it makes me enemies to speak about them." "I know," says he gravely, "that you will answer my question when I ask it; let me take care of the rest." "I never thought," said I, "Sir, that Nebuchadnezzar had any pretensions to be a saint. He was a scourge in God's hand, as is famine, or the plague, but that does not make either of them a wholesome visitation." "What!" says he, "Does not God call him his servant? Does he not say that he did his bidding about Tyre, and that he gave him Egypt to plunder for his recompence? Was not it by God's command he led his people into captivity? and did not he believe in God, when Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego escaped from the fiery furnace? Surely he must be a saint." "I am perfectly satisfied," said I, "and give my consent to his canonization, rather than either your Majesty, or Abba Salama, should excommunicate me upon the question." He now laughed out, and seemed greatly diverted, and was going to speak, when Tecla Mariam, and a number of others, came in. I withdrew to a side with respect, as the secretary had a small piece of paper in his hand. He staid about two minutes with the king, when the room filled, and the levee began. I wished Tecla Mariam might not be the worse for last night's sitting up. "The better, the better," says he, "much the better. You see we are

becoming all good, day and night we are busy about religion." "Are you upon Nebuchadnezzar to-day, friend?" said I; "the king says to me he is a saint." "Just such a saint, I suppose," says he, "as our Ras Michael, who, I believe, is jealous of him; for he is going himself to decide this dispute immediately. Go to the Ashoa *, and you will hear it."

There was a number of people in the outer court of the king's house, crying very tumultuously for a convocation of the church. At twelve o'clock there was no word of Michael at the palace; but I saw many nobility of the first rank, members of the council there, and expected he was coming. Instead of this, the large kettle-drum, or nagareet, called the lion, was carried to the king's gate, which occasioned great speculation. But presently proclamation was made in these words, given me by Tecla Mariam himself: "Hear! hear! hear! they that pretend they do not hear this, will not be the last punished for disobeying: Whereas many disorderly and idle persons have flocked to this capital for some days past, and brought no provisions for themselves, or others, and have frightened the country people from coming to market, whereby all degrees of men, in this capital, are threatened with famine, and scarcity is already begun; this is, therefore, to give notice, That if any such people, after twelve o'clock to-morrow, be found in this city, or in the roads adjoining thereto, they shall be punished like rebels and robbers, and their fault not prescribed for seven years."

And, in about ten minutes afterwards, another proclamation was made: "The king orders four hundred Galla of his troops to patrole the streets all the

† The largest court, or outer space, surrounding the king's house.

night, and disperse summarily all sorts of people that they shall find gathered together; commands thirty horse to patrole between Debra Tzai and Kolla, thirty on the road to Woggora, and thirty on that to Emfras, to protect our subjects coming to market, and going about their other lawful business: They that are wise will keep themselves well when they are so." There was no need of a second proclamation. The monks were all wise, and returned in an instant every man to his home. The Galla were mentioned to terrify only; for they did not exist, Ozoro Esther having cleared the palace of that nation; but the monks knew there would be found people in their place every bit as bad as Galla, and did not choose to risk the trial of the difference.

At this time a piece of bad news was circulated at Gondar, that Kasmati Boro, whom the Ras had left governor of Damot, had been beaten by Fasil, and obliged to retire to his own country in Gojam, to Hadis Amba, near the passage of the Nile, at Mine; and that Fasil, with a larger army of stranger Galla than that he had brought to Fagitta, had taken possession of Bure, the usual place of his residence. This being privately talked of as true, I asked Kefla Yasous in confidence what he knew of it. Upon its being confirmed, I could not disguise my sorrow, as I conceived that unexpected turn of affairs to be an invincible obstacle to my reaching the source of the Nile. "You are mistaken," says Kefla Yasous to me, "it is the best thing can happen to you. Why you desire to see those places I do not know, but this I am sure of, you never will arrive there with any degree of safety while Fasil commands. He is as perfect a Galla as ever forded the Nile; he has neither word, nor oath, nor faith that can bind him; he does mischief for mischief's sake, and then laughs at it.

"Michael, after the battle of Fagitta, proposed to his army to pass the rainy season at Bure, and quarter the troops in the towns and villages about. He would have staid a year with them, to shew that Fasil could not help them, but he was over-ruled. At Hydar Michael (that is, in November next), all Abyssinia will march against him, and he will not stay for us, and this time we shall not leave his country till we have eaten it bare; and, then, at your ease, you will see every thing, defend yourself by your own force, and be beholden to nobody; and remember what I say, peace with Fasil there never will be, for he does not desire it; nor, till you see his head upon a pole, or Michael's army encamped at Bure, will you (if you are wise) ever attempt to pass Maitsha." Memorable words! often afterwards reflected upon, though they were not strictly verified in the extent they were meant when spoken.

CHAP. II.

Battle of Banja—Conspiracy against Michael—The Author retires to Emfras—Description of Gondar, Emfras, and Lake Tzana.

After Fasil's defeat at Fagitta, and the affront he received at Assoa, in the heart of his own country, he had continued his route to Bure, a district of the Agows, where was his constant residence. After this, he had crossed the Nile into the country of Bizamo, and Boro de Gago had taken up his risidence at Bure, when Michael returned to Gondar; but no sooner had Fasil heard of his arrival in those parts, than he marched with a number of horse, and forced his rival to retire to Gojam.

The Agows were all loyalists in their hearts, had been forced to join Fasil, but, immediately after his defeat, had declared for Michael. The first thing, therefore, Fasil did, when returned to Bure, was to attack the Agows on every side: a double advantage was sure to follow this victory; the famishing his enemies at Gondar, and converting so rich a territory to his own use, by extirpating the Agows, and laying it open to be possessed by his countrymen, the Galla, from Bizamo, as had already happened to Maitsha.

A very obstinate battle was fought at Banja, one of heir principal settlements, in which the Agows were

entirely defeated, seven of their chiefs killed, all men of great consequence, among whom was Ayamico, a very near relation of the king. The news were first brought by a son of Nanna Georgis, chief of the Agows, who escaped from the battle. Michael was at dinner, and I was present. It was one of his carousals for the marriage of Powussen, when young Georgis came into the room, in a torn and dirty habit, unattended, and almost unperceived, and presented himself at the foot of the table. Michael had then in his hand a cup of gold, it being the exclusive privilege of the governor of the province of Tigre to drink out of such a cup; it was full of wine; before a word was spoken, and, upon the first appearance of the man, he threw the cup and wine upon the ground, and cried out, "I am guilty of the death of these people!" Every one arose, the table was removed, and Georgis told his misfortune, that Nanna Georgis his father, Zeegam Georgis, the next in rank among them, Ayamico the king's relation, and four other chiefs, were slain at Banja, and their race nearly extirpated by a victory gained by Fasil with much bloodshed, and after cruelly pursued in retaliation for that of Fagitta.

A council was immediately called, where it was resolved, that, though the rainy season was at hand, the utmost expedition should be made to take the field; that Gusho and Powussen should return to their provinces, and increase their army to the utmost of their power; that the king should take the low road by Foggora and Dara, there to join the troops of Begemder and Amhara, cross the Nile at the mouth of the lake, above the second cataract, as it is called, and march thence straight to Bure, which, by speedy marches, might be done in five or six days. No resolution was ever embraced with more alacrity; the cause of the Agows was the cause of Gondar, or fa-

mine would else immediately follow. The king's troops and those of Michael were all ready, and had just refreshed themselves by a week's festivity.

Gusho and Powussen, after having sworn to Michael that they never would return without Fasil's head, decamped next morning with very different intentions in their hearts; for no sooner had they reached Begemder, than they entered into a conspiracy, in form, against Michael, which they had meditated and digested in their minds ever since the affront they had received from Michael, about Woosheka, after the battle of Fagitta: they had resolved to make peace with Fasil, and swear with him a solemn league, that they were but to have one cause, one council, and one interest, till they had deprived Michael of his life and dignity. The plan was, that, in hopes to join with them, the army should pass by Dara and the mouth of the lake, as aforesaid, between that lake, called the lake of Dembea, on the north side, and another small lake, which seems formerly to have been part of the great one, and is called Court-ohha; on the south is the village of Derdera, and the church of St Michael. Here was to be the scene of action; as soon as Michael advanced to Derdera, Gusho and Powussen were to close him behind on the north; Fasil, from Maitsha, was to appear on his front from the south, whilst, between Court-ohha and the lake, in the midst of these three armies, Michael was to lose his liberty or his life. The secret was profoundly kept, though known by many; but every one was employed in preparations for the campaign on the king's part, and no suspicion entertained, for nothing costs an Abyssinian less than to dissemble.

It had been agreed by Gusho and Powussen before parting, in order to deceive Michael, that, should Fasil retire from Bure at their approach, and pass the

Nile into his own country, the King, Ras Michael, and part of the army, should remain at Bure all the rainy season; that, upon the return of the fair weather, they were all again to assemble at Bure, cross the Nile into Bizamo, and lay waste the country of the Galla, that the vestige of habitation should not be seen upon it.

All this time I found myself declining in health, to which the irregularities of the last week had greatly contributed. The King and Ras had sufficiently provided tents and conveniences for me, yet I wanted to construct for myself a tent, with a large slit in the roof, that I might have an opportunity of taking observations with my quadrant, without being inquieted by troublesome or curious visitors. I therefore obtained leave from the king to go to Emfras, a town about twenty miles south from Gondar, where a number of Mahometan tent-makers lived. Gusho had a house there, and a pleasant garden, which he very willingly gave me the use of; with this advice, however, which at the time I did not understand, rather to go on to Amhara with him, for I should there sooner recover my health, and be more in quiet than with the King or Michael. As the king was to pass immediately under this town, and as most of those that loaded and unloaded his tents and baggage were Mahometans, and lived at Emfras, I could not be better situated, in point of safety, or more at my liberty and ease, than there.

After having taken my leave of the king and the Ras, I paid the same compliment to the Iteghe at Koscam: I had not for several days been able to wait upon her, on account of the riots during the marriage, where the Ras required my attendance, and would admit of no excuse. That excellent princess endeavoured much to dissuade me from leaving Gondar. She

treated the intention of going to the source of the Nile as a fantastical folly, unworthy of any man of sense or understanding; and very earnestly advised me to stay under her protection at Koscam, till I saw whether Ras Michael and the king would return, and then take the first good opportunity of returning to my own country through Tigre, the way that I came, before any evil should overtake me.

I excused myself the best I could. It was not easy to do it with any degree of conviction, to people utterly unlearned, and who knew nothing of the prejudice of ages in favour of the attempt I was engaged in. I therefore turned the discourse to professions of gratitude for benefits that I had every day received from her, and for the very great honour that she then did me, when she condescended to testify her anxiety concerning the fate of a poor unknown traveller like me, who could not possibly have any merit but what arose from her own gracious and generous sentiments, and universal charity, that extended to every object in proportion as they were helpless. "See! see!" says she, "how every day of our life furnishes us with proofs of the perverseness and contradiction of human nature; you are come from Jerusalem, through vile Turkish governments, and hot unwholesome climates, to see a river and a bog, no part of which you can carry away were it ever so valuable, and of which you have in your own country a thousand larger, better, and cleaner; and you take it ill when I discourage you from the pursuit of this fancy, in which you are likely to perish, without your friends at home ever hearing when or where the accident happened. While I, on the other hand, the mother of kings, who have sat upon the throne of this country more than thirty years, have for my only wish, night and day, that, after giving up every thing in the world, I could be

conveyed to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and beg alms for my subsistence all my life after, if I could only be buried at last in the street within sight of the gate of that temple where our blessed Saviour once lay." This was said in the most melancholy tone possible; an unusal gloom hanging upon her countenance. Her desiring me, however, to stay at Koscam, till I knew whether the king and Michael would return or not, considering the large army they were to lead to the field, and the feebleness of the so-often defeated Fasil, made me from that instant apprehend that there was something behind with which I was yet unacquainted.

Gold, and orders for cattle and provisions while at Emfras, followed this conversation with the queen; this, indeed, had never failed at other times, which, by Ayto Aylo's advice, I never more refused. Here I cannot help observing the different manner in which three people did the same thing. When I received gold from Michael, it was openly from his hand to mine, without compliment, as he paid the rest of the king's servants. When I received it from the king, it was likewise from his own hand; it was always when alone, with a fear expressed that I suffered myself to be straitened rather than ask, and that I did not levy, with sufficient severity, the money the several places allotted to me were bound to pay, which, indeed was always the case. The queen, on the other hand, from whom I received constant donations, never either produced gold herself, nor spoke of it before or after, but sent it by a servant of hers to a servant of mine, to employ it for the necessaries of my family.

I confess I left the queen very much affected with the disposition I had found her in; and, if I had been of a temper to give credit to prognostics, and a safe

way had been open through Tigre, I should at that time, perhaps, have taken the queen's advice, and returned without seeing the fountains of the Nile, in the same manner that all the travellers of antiquity, who had ever as yet endeavoured to explore them, had been forced to do; but the prodigious bustle and preparation which I found was daily making in Gondar, and the assurances every body gave me that, safe in the middle of a victorious army, I should see, at my leisure, that famous spot, made me resume my former resolutions, awakened my ambition, and made me look upon it as a kind of treason done to my country, in which such efforts were then making for discoveries, to renounce, now it was in my power, the putting them in possession of that one which had baffled the courage and perseverance of the bravest men in all ages. The pleasure, too, of herborising in an unknown country, such as Emfras was, of continuing to do so in safety, and the approaching every day to the end of my wishes, chased away all those gloomy apprehensions which I imbibed from the appearance and discourse of the queen, and of which I now began to be ashamed.

Gondar, the metropolis of Abyssinia, is situated upon a hill of considerable height, the top of it nearly plain, on which the town is placed. It consists of about ten thousand families in times of peace; the houses are chiefly of clay, the roofs thatched in the form of cones, which is always the construction within the tropical rains. On the west end of the town is the king's house, formerly a structure of considerable consequence; it was a square building, flanked with square towers; it was formerly four stories high, and, from the top of it, had a magnificent view of all the country southward to the lake Tzana. Great part of this house is now in ruins, having been burnt at

different times; but there is still ample lodging in the two lowest floors of it, the audience chamber being above one hundred and twenty feet long.

A succession of kings have built apartments by the side of it of clay only, in the manner and fashion of their own country; for the palace itself was built by masons from India, in the time of Facilidas, and by such Abyssinians as had been instructed in architecture by the Jesuits without embracing their religion, and had after remained in the country, unconnected with the expulsion of the Portuguese, during this prince's reign*.

The palace and all its contiguous buildings are surrounded by a substantial stone-wall thirty feet high, with battlements upon the outer wall, and a parapet roof between the outer and inner, forming a gallery, by which you can go along the whole and look into the street. There appears to have never been any embrasures for cannon, and the four sides of this wall are above an English mile and a half in length.

The mountain, or hill, on which the town is situated, is surrounded on every side by a deep valley, which has three outlets; the one to the south to Dembea, Maitsha, and the Agows; the second to the north-west towards Sennaar, over the high mountain Debra Tzai, or the mountain of the Sun, at the root of which, Koscam, the palace of the Iteghe, is situated, and the low countries of Walkayt and Waldubba; the third is

* This town was only an obscure village till the time of Susneus. His son Facilidas having fixed his residence near Gondar, the palace was built for him by the architects above mentioned. Hannes, or John I., added several splendid structures to it. Yasous the Great continued his father's bounty to the city, which, in course of time, made it the largest in Abbesh. Coga and Dancaz, as well as Tegulet in Shoa, have been nearly deserted.—E.

to the north to Woggora, over the high mountain Lamalmon, and so on east through Tigre to the Red Sea. The river Kahha, coming from the Mountain of the Sun, or Debra Tzai, runs through the valley, and covers all the south of the town; the Angrab, falling from Woggora, surrounds it on the N. N. E. These rivers join at the bottom of the hill, about a quarter of a mile south of the town.

Immediately upon the bank opposite to Gondar, on the other side of the river, is a large town of Mahometans, of about a thousand houses. These are all active and laborious people; great part of them are employed in taking care of the king's and nobility's baggage and field-equipage, both when they take the field and when they return from it. They pitch and strike their tents with surprising facility and expedition: they load and conduct the mules and the baggage, and are formed into a body under proper officers, but never suffered, nor do they choose, to fight on either side.

Gondar, by a number of observations of the sun and stars, made by day and night, in the course of three years, with an astronomical quadrant of three feet radius, and two excellent telescopes, and by a mean of all their small differences, is in lat. 12° 34′ 30″: by many observations of the satellites of Jupiter, especially the first, both in their immersions and emersions during that period, I concluded its longitude to be 37° 33′ 0″ east from the meridian of Greenwich.

It was on the 4th of April 1770, at eight o'clock in the morning, when I set out from Gondar*. We

* The journal of the road to Emfras is in Balugani's handwriting. The first article, in Italian, is April 4th, eight o'clock A. M. left Gondar; course S. by W.; about an hour after, always S. 8¼ hours cross the Caha. *** April 5th, 9 hours A. M. enter Emfras.—E.

passed the Kahha, and the Mahometan town, and, about ten in the morning, we came to a considerable river called the Mogetch, which runs in a deep, rugged bed of flakey blue stones. We crossed it upon a very solid good bridge of four arches, a convenience seldom to be met with in passing Abyssinian rivers, but very necessary on this, as, contrary to most of their streams, which become dry, or stand in pools, on the approach of the sun, the Mogetch runs constantly, by reason that its sources are in the highest hills of Woggora, where clouds break plentifully at all seasons of the year. In the rainy months it rolls a prodigious quantity of water into the lake Tzana, and would be absolutely impassable to people bringing provision to the market, were it not for this bridge built by Facilidas; yet it is not judiciously placed, being close to the mountain's foot, in the face of a torrent, where it runs strongest, and carries along with it stones of a prodigious size, which luckily, as yet, have injured no part of the bridge. The water of the river Mogetch is not wholesome, probably from the minerals, or stoney particles it carries along with it, and the slatey strata over which it runs. We have many rivers of this quality in the Alps, especially between mount Cenis and Grenoble.

Delivered now from the strait and rugged country on the banks of the Mogetch, we entered into a very extensive plain, bounded on the east side by the mountains, and on the west by the large lake of Dembea, otherwise called the lake Tzana, or Bahar Tzana, the Sea of Tzana, which geographers have corrupted into the word Barcena. Rejoiced at last that I had elbow room, I began the most laborious search for shrubs and herbs all over the plain, my servants on one side, and I on the other, searching the country on each side of the road. It appeared to our wants

tions, that the neighbourhood of such a lake, in so remote a part of the world, ought infallibly to produce something perfectly beautiful, or altogether new. In this, however, we were disappointed, as indeed we always were in meadows, and where grass grew so exuberantly as it did all over this plain.

At eleven o'clock we crossed the river Tedda; here the road divides; that branch to the east leads to Wechne, in the wild uncultivated territory of Belessen, famous for no production but that of honey.

We continued along the other branch of the road, which led south to Emfras. One mile distant, on our left, is the church of St George. About one o'clock we halted at the church Zingetch Mariam; and a few minutes after, we passed the river Gomara, a considerable stream rising in Belessen, which stands in pools during the dry weather, but had now begun to run; its course north-east and south-west, across the plain, after which it falls into the lake Tzana.

At two we halted at Correva, a small village, beautifully situated on a gentle rising ground, through which the road passes in view of the lake, and then again divides; one branch continuing south to Emfras, and so on to Foggera and Dara; the other to Mitraha, two small islands in the lake, lying south-west from this at the distance of about four hours journey. The road from Correva to Emfras, for the first hour, is all in the plain; for the second, along the gentle slope of a mountain of no considerable height; and the remainder is upon a perfect flat, or along the lake Tzana.

The 6th of April, at five in the morning, we left our present station at Correva; where, though we had employed several hours in the search, we found little remarkable of either plants or trees, being [illegible] the kind we had already seen. We conti-

nued our road chiefly to the south, through the same sort of country, till we came to the foot of a mountain, or rather a hill, covered with bushes and thorny trees, chiefly the common acacia, but of no size, and seeming not to thrive. I pitched my tent here to search what that cover would produce. There were a great quantity of hares, which I could make no use of, the Abyssinians holding them in abhorrence, as thinking them unclean; but, to make amends, I found great store of Guinea fowls *, of the common gray kind we have in Europe, of which I shot, in a little time, above a score; and these, being perfectly lawful food, proved a very agreeable variety from the raw beef, butter, and honey, which we had lived upon hitherto, and which was to be our diet (it is not an unpleasant one, at least a part of it), till we reached Emfras.

At eight in the morning I passed through Tangouri, a considerable village. About a hundred yards on the right from this, we have a finer prospect of the lake than even from Correva itself. This village is chiefly inhabited by Mahometans, whose occupation it is to go in caravans far to the south, on the other side of the Nile, through the several districts of Galla, to whom they carry beads and large needles, cohol, or stibium, myrrh, coarse cloths made in Begemder, and pieces of blue cotton cloths from Surat, called marowti. They are generally nearly a year absent, and bring in return slaves, civet, wax, hides, and cardomum in large beautiful pods; they bring likewise a great quantity of ginger, but that is from farther south, nearer Narea. It appears to me to be a poor trade, as far as I could compute it, considering the

* Ethiopic name, Zugura.—E.

loss of time employed in it, the many accidents, extortions, and robberies these merchants meet with. Whether it would be ever worth while to follow it on another footing, and under another government, is what I am not qualified enough to say.

On the left of Tangouri, divided from it by a plain of about a mile in breadth, stands a high rock called Amba Mariam, with a church upon the very summit of it. There is no possibility of climbing this rock but at one place, and there it is very difficult and rugged: here the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages retreat upon any sudden alarm or inroad of an enemy.

At nine o'clock, after passing a plain, with the lake Tzana all the way on our right, in length about three miles, we came to the banks of the river Gorno, a small but clear stream: it rises near Wechne, and has a bridge of one arch over it, about half a mile above the ford. Its course is north and south nearly; it loses itself in the lake between Mitraha and Lamgue. A mile farther we arrived at Emfras, after a very pleasant, though not interesting excursion.

The town is situated on a steep hill, and the way up to it is almost perpendicular like the ascent of a ladder. The houses are all placed about the middle of the hill, fronting the west, in number about 300. Above these houses are gardens, or rather fields, full of trees and bushes, without any sort of order, up to the very top. Emfras commands a view of the whole lake, and part of the country on the other side. It was once a royal residence. On a small hill is a house of Hatze Hannes, in form of a square tower, now going fast to ruin.

Emfras is in lat. 12° 12′ 38″ N. and long. 37° 38′ 30″ E. of the meridian of Greenwich. The distances and directions of this journey from Gondar were care-

fully observed by a compass, and computed by a watch of Ellicot's, after which these situations were checked by astronomical observations of latitude and longitude in every way that they could be taken, and it was very seldom in a day's journey that we erred a mile in our computation.

The lake of Tzana is by much the largest expanse of water known in that country. Its extent, however, has been greatly exaggerated. Its greatest breadth is from Dingleber to Lamgue, which, in a line nearly east and west, is 35 miles; but it decreases greatly at each extremity, where it is sometimes not above ten miles broad. Its greatest length is from Bab Baha to a little south-west and by west of that part, where the Nile, after having crossed the end of it by a current always visible, turns towards Dara into the territory of Alata, which is 49 miles from north to south, and which extent this lake has in length. In the dry months, from October to March, the lake shrinks greatly in size; but after all those rivers are full which are on every side of it, and fall into the lake, like radii drawn to a centre, then it swells, and extends itself into the plain country, and has of course a much larger surface.

There are forty-five inhabited islands in the lake, if you believe the Abyssinians, who, in everything, are very great liars *. I conceive the number may

* In the particular map, which was drawn by Balugani after the journey to the Sources, such of these islands are marked as could be seen from the shores; but several of considerable importance, often mentioned in the Ethiopic histories, and even Brigueda and Galila, are not inserted. In Ludolf's map, after the Jesuits, we see Dek on the west side; then Tzana (which gives name to the lake), further to the east, and in the same parallel of latitude with the south part of Dek; north of Dek is St Anthony;

be about eleven: the principal is Dek, or Daka, or Daga *, nearly in the middle of the lake; its true extent I cannot specify, never having been there. Besides Dek, the other islands are Halimoon, nearer Gondar; Briguida, nearer Gorgora; and still farther is Galila. All these islands were formerly used as prisons for the great people, or for a voluntary retreat, on account of some disgust or great misfortune, or as places of security to deposit their valuable effects during troublesome times. When I was in Abyssinia a few weeks after what I have been now relating, 1300 ounces of gold, confided by the queen to Welleta Christos, her governor of Dek, a man of extraordinary sanctity, who had fasted for forty years, was stolen away by that priest, who fled and hid himself; nor would the queen ever suffer him to be searched after or apprehended.

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and north of St Anthony, Galila, near Mescalaxos, in Mr Bruce's map. Mitraha (Mitsraha), by the Jesuits called Megarahha, is towards Gondar in both maps. Quebran, often mentioned in history, is opposite Gorgora, in Ludolf. Debra Mariam, opposite to Coga, the ancient residence of Jacob and Socinios, is the most southern island in the map of Ludolf; but what is singular enough, Coga and Debra Mariam are both omitted in that of Mr Bruce. All these islands, and many more, such as Debra Rema, &c. exist; and both maps are evidently imperfect.—E.

* It signifies the hill, or high ground.

CHAP. III.

The king encamps at Lamgué—Transactions there—Passes the Nile, and encamps at Derdera—The Author follows the king.

On the 12th of May, we heard the king had marched to Tedda. Messengers from Begemder, and from Gusho of Amhara, had been constantly passing to and from his majesty, pressing Ras Michael to take the field as soon as possible, to prevent the utter destruction of the Agows, which Fasil every day was striving to accomplish. They put him, moreover in mind, that the rains were begun; that, in Fasil's country, they were already sufficient to swell the many rivers they had to pass before they arrived at Bure; they desired him to reflect, that, with the armies they were bringing to his assistance, it was more necessary to save time than stay for a number of troops; lastly, that it was absolutely useless to wait for any reinforcement from Tigre, but that he should rather march by Emfras, Foggora, and Dara, cross the Nile where it comes out of the lake; while they, with their united armies, passed at the bridge near the second cataract, sixteen miles below, burnt and laid waste Woodage Asahel's country, and joined him at Derdera, between Courtohho and the lake. This was precisely what Ras Michael himself had planned; it embraced the

whole country of his enemy, and made his scheme of vengeance complete; hitherto not a word had transpired that could raise the smallest suspicion of treachery.

The 13th, by day-break, Netcho, Fit-Auraris to Ras Michael, passed in great haste below the town towards Foggora. The king had made a forced march from Tedda, and was that night to encamp at a house of Gusho's, near Lamgue. This was great expedition, and sufficiently marked the eagerness with which the enterprise was undertaken. The effects of the approach of the army were soon seen. Every one hid what was best in his house, or fled to the mountains with it. Emfras was left in a few hours quite empty: Ras Michael, advancing at the head of an army, spread as much terror as would the approach of the day of judgment. It was then

> ——————Destruction in a monarch's voice
> Cried havock, and let slip the dogs of war.

For, strict and just as he was in time of peace, or in preserving the police, the security of the ways, and the poor from the tyranny of the rich, he was most licentious and cruel the moment he took the field, especially if that country which he entered had ever shewn the least tincture of enmity against him.

About 11 o'clock in the morning, the king's Fit-Auraris passed. He was a near relation of Ayamico, one of the chiefs of the Agows, who was a relation of the king, as I have before-mentioned, and slain by Fasil at the battle of Banja. With him I had contracted a great degree of friendship; he had about 50 horse and 200 foot: as he passed at several places, he made proclamation in name of the king, That nobody should leave their houses, but remain quiet in them without

fear, and that every house found empty should be burnt. He sent a servant as he passed, telling me the king was that night to lie at Lamgue, and desiring me to send him what spirits I could spare, which I accordingly did, upon his providing a man who could protect the houses adjoining mine from the robbery and the violence, of which the inhabitants were in hourly fear.

About the close of the evening we heard the king's kettle-drums. Forty-five of these instruments constantly go before him, beating all the way while he is on his march. The Mahometan town, near the water, was plundered in a minute; but the inhabitants, long before, had removed every thing valuable. Twenty different parties of stragglers came up the hill to do the same by Emfras. Some of the inhabitants were known, others not so, but their houses had nothing in them; at last these plunderers all united in mine, demanding meat and drink, and all sort of accommodation. Our friend, left with us by the Fit-Auraris, resisted as much as one man could do with sticks and whips, and it was a scuffle till midnight; at last, having cleared ourselves of them, luckily without their setting fire to the town, we remained quiet for the rest of the night.

On the 14th, at day-break, I mounted my horse, with all my men servants, leaving the women servants and an old man to take care of the house. It was very unsafe to travel in such company at such an hour. We crossed the river Arno, a little below Emfras, before we got into the plain; after which we went at a smart gallop, and arrived at Lamgue between eight and nine o'clock.

Early as it was, the king was then in council, and Ras Michael, who had his advisers assembled also in his tent, had just left it to go to the king's. There was about 500 yards between their tents, and a free avenue

is constantly left, in which it is a crime to stand, or even to cross, unless for messengers sent from the one to the other. The old general dismounted at the door of the tent; and, though I saw he perceived us, and was always at other times most courteous, he passed us without taking the least notice, and entered the tent of the king.

Although my place in the household gave me free access to wherever the king was, I did not choose, at that time, to enter the back tent, and place myself behind his chair, as I might have done; I rather thought it better to go to the tent of Ozoro Esther, where I was sure at least of getting a good breakfast: Nor was I disappointed. As soon as I shewed myself at the door of the tent of that princess, who was lying upon a sofa, the moment she cast her eyes upon me, she cried out, "There is Yagoube! there is the man I wanted!" The tent was cleared of all but her women, and she then began to enumerate several complaints, which she thought, before the end of the campaign, would carry her to her grave. It was easy to see they were of the slightest kind, though it would not have been agreeable to have told her so, for she loved to be thought ill, to be attended, condoled with, and flattered; she was, however, in these circumstances, so perfectly good, so conversable, so elegant in all her manners, that her physician would have been tempted to wish never to see her well.

She was then with child by Ras Michael; and the late festival, upon her niece's marriage with Powussen of Begemder, had been much too hard for her constitution, always weak and delicate since her first misfortunes, and the death of Mariam Barea. After giving her my advice, and directing her women how to administer what I was to send her, the doors of the tent were thrown open; all our friends came flocking

round us, when we presently saw, that the interval, employed in consultation, had not been spent uselessly, for a most abundant breakfast was produced in wooden platters upon the carpet. There were excellent stewed fowls, but so inflamed with Cayenne pepper as almost to blister the mouth; fowls dressed with boiled wheat, just once broken in the middle, *in the* manner they are prepared in India, with rice called *pillaw*, this, too, abundantly charged with pepper; Guinea hens, roasted hard without butter, or any sort of sauce, very white, but as tough as leather; above all, the never-failing *brinde*, for so they call the collops of raw beef, without which nobody could have been satisfied; but, what was more agreeable to me, a large quantity of wheat-bread, of Dembea flour, equal in all its qualities to the best in London or Paris.

The Abyssinians say, you must plant first and then water; nobody, therefore, drinks till they have finished eating; after this, the glass went cheerfully about; there was excellent red wine, but strong, of the nature of cote-roti, brought from Karoota, which is the wine country, about six miles south east from the place where we then were; good new brandy; honey-wine, or hydromel, and a species of beer called bouza, both of which were fermented with herbs, or leaves of trees, and made very heady; they are disagreeable liquors to strangers. Our kind landlady, who never had quitted her sofa, pressed about the glass in the very briskest manner, reminding us that our time was short, and that the drum would presently give the signal for striking the tents. For my part, this weighed exceedingly with me the contrary way to her intentions, for I began to fear I should not be able to go home, and I was not prepared to go on with the army; besides, it was indispensably necessary to see both the king and Ras Michael, and that I by no means

chose to do when my presence of mind had left me; I therefore made my apology to Ozoro Esther, by a message delivered by one of her women, and slipt out of the tent to wait upon the king.

I thought to put on my most sedate appearance, that none of my companions in the king's tent should see that I was affected with liquor; though intoxication in Abyssinia is neither uncommon nor a reproach, when you are not engaged in business or attendance. I therefore went on as composedly as possible, without recollecting that I had already advanced near a hundred yards, walking on that forbidden precinct or avenue between the king's tent and Ras Michael's, where nobody interrupted me. The ease with which I proceeded, among such a crowd and bustle, soon brought my transgression to my mind, and I hurried out of the forbidden place in an instant.

I met several of my acquaintance, who accompanied me to the king's tent. It was now noon; a plentiful dinner or breakfast was waiting, which I had absolutely refused to partake of till I had seen the king. Thinking all was a secret that had passed at Ozoro Esther's, I lifted the curtain behind the king's chair, and coming round till nearly opposite to him; I was about to perform the usual prostration, when, in the very instant the young prince, George, who was standing opposite to me on the king his brother's right hand, stept forward and laid his hand across my breast, as if to prevent me from kneeling; then turning to the king, who was sitting, as usual, in his chair in the alcove, "Sir," says he, "before you allow Yagoube to kneel, you should first provide two men to lift him up again; for Ozoro Esther has given him so much wine, that he will never be able to do it himself."

Though it was almost impossible to avoid laughing, it was visible the king constrained himself, and was

not pleased. The drink had really this good effect, that it made me less abashed than I otherwise should have been at this unexpected sally of the young prince. I was, however, somewhat disconcerted, and made my prostration perhaps less gracefully than at another time, and this raised the merriment of those in waiting, as attributing it to intoxication. Upon rising, the king most graciously stretched out his hand for me to kiss. While I was holding his hand, he said to his brother, coldly, "Surely if you thought him drunk, you must have expected a reply; in that case, it would have been more prudent in you, and more civil, not to have made your observation."

The prince was much abashed. I hastened across the carpet, and took both his hands and kissed them; the laughers did not seem much at their ease, especially when I turned and stood before the king. He was kind, sensible, composed, and condescending; he complained that I had abandoned him; asked if I had been well-used at Emfras, and doubted that I had wanted every thing; "but I sent you nothing on purpose," says he, "because you said fasting would do you good after too much feasting at Gondar, and I knew that hunger would bring you soon back again to us." "If your majesty," said I, "takes the prince's word, I have been carousing to-day in your camp more that ever I did at Gondar; and, I do assure your majesty, prince George's reflections were not without foundation."

"Come, come," says the king, "Georgis is your firm and fast friend, and so he ought; he owes it to you that he is so able a horseman and so good a marksman, without which he could never be more than a common soldier. He has commanded a division of the army to-day."—"Of 500 horse," cries out the prince in extacy; "and when the king my brother

to-morrow leads the van, you shall be my Fit-Aurari, if you please, when we pass the Nile, and with my party I shall scour Maitsha." "I should be very unhappy, prince," said I, "to have a charge of that importance, for which I know myself to be totally unqualified; there are many brave men who have a title to that office, and who will fill it with honour to themselves, and safety to your person." "So you will not trust yourself," says the prince, "with me and my party when we shall cross the Nile? Are you angry with me, Yagoube, or are you afraid of Woodage Ahasel?" "Were you in earnest, prince, in what you now say," replied I, "you suppose two things, both greater reproaches than that of being overtaken with wine. Assure yourself I am, and always shall be, your most affectionate and most faithful servant; and that I shall think it an honour to follow you in Maitsha, or elsewhere, even as a common horseman, though, instead of one, there were in it ten thousand Woodage Ahasels." "O ho!" says the king, "then you are all friends; and I must tell you one thing; Georgis is more drunk with the thoughts of his command to-day than any soldier in my camp will be to-night with bouza." And this, indeed, seemed to be the case; for he was else a prince rather reserved and sparing of words, especially before his brother.

"Tell me, Yagoube," continues the king, "and tell me truly"—at that very instant came in a messenger from Ras Michael, who, going round the chair without saluting, spoke to the king, upon which the room was cleared; but I afterwards learned, that news were received from Begemder, that Powussen and his troops were ready to march, but that two of Gusho's nephews had rebelled, whom it had taken some time to subdue; that another messenger was left behind, but had fallen sick at Aringo, who, however, would come

forward as soon as possible with his master's message, and would be probably at the camp that night. He brought also as undoubted intelligence, that Fasil, upon hearing Ras Michael's march, was preparing to repass the Nile into the country of the Galla. This occasioned very great doubts, because dispatches had arrived from Nanna Georgis's son, the day before, at Tedda, which declared that Fasil had decamped from Bure that very day the messenger came away, advancing northward towards Gondar, but with what intention he could not say; and this was well known to be intelligence that might be strictly and certainly relied upon.

On the 15th, the king decamped early in the morning, and, as prince George had said the night before, led the van in person; a flattering mark of confidence that Ras Michael had put in him now for the first time, of which the king was very sensible. The Ras, however, had given him (Maguzet) a dry-nurse, as it is called, in Billetana Gueta Welleta Michael, an old and approved officer, trained to war from his infancy, and surrounded with the most tried of the troops of Tigre. The king halted at the river Gomara, but advanced that same night to the passage where the Nile comes out of the lake Tzana, and resumes again the appearance of a river.

The king remained the 15th and 16th encamped upon the Nile. Several things that should have given umbrage, and begot suspicion, happened while they were in this situation. Aylo, governor of Gojam had been summoned to assist Ras Michael when Powussen and Gusho should march to join him with their forces of Begemder and Amhara, and his mother Ozoro Welleta Israel, then at Gondar, had promised he should not fail. This lady was younger sister to Ozoro Esther; both were daughters of the Iteghe. She was as beau-

tiful as Ozoro Esther, but very much her inferior in behaviour, character, and conduct: she had refused the old Ras, who asked her in marriage before he was called from Tigre to Gondar, and a mortal hatred had followed her refusal. It was therefore reported, that he was heard to say, he would order the eyes of Welleta Israel to be pulled out, if Aylo, her son, did not join him. It must have been a man such as Ras Michael that could form such a resolution, for Welleta Israel's eyes were most captivating. She was then in the camp with her sister.

A single small tent had appeared the evening of the 15th on the other side of the Nile, and, on the morning of the 16th, Welleta Israel and the tent were missing: she boldly made her escape in the night. The tent had probably concealed her son Aylo, or some of his friends, to show her the passage; for the Nile there was both broad and deep, rolling along a prodigious mass of water, with large, black, slippery stones at the bottom. It was therefore a very arduous, bold undertaking for soldiers and men accustomed to pass rivers in the day-time; but for a woman, and in the night too, with all the hurry that the fear of being intercepted must have occasioned, it was so extraordinary as to exceed all belief. But she was conducted by an intrepid leader; for with her deserted Ayto Engedan, son of Kasmati Eshte, and consequently nephew to Ozoro Welleta Israel; but their own inclinations had given them still a nearer relation than the degree received from their parents, or decency, should have permitted. All the camp had trembled for Welleta Israel; and every one now rejoiced that so bold an attempt had been attended with the success it merited. It was necessary, however, to dissemble before Michael, who, intent upon avenging the Agows against Fasil, carried his reflections at that time no further;

for Aylo's not coming was attributed to the influence of Fasil, whose government of Damot joins Gojam, and it was even said, that Welleta Israel, his mother, had been the occasion of this, from her hatred to Michael, and her attachment to Fasil: The first cause was sufficiently apparent, the last had formerly been no less so.

On the 17th, after sun rise, the king passed the Nile, and encamped at a small village on the other side, called Tsoomwa, where his Fit-Auraris had taken post early in the morning. I have often mentioned this officer without explanation, and perhaps it may now be right to state his duty. The Fit-Auraris* is an officer depending immediately upon the commander in chief, and corresponding with him directly, without receiving orders from any other person. He is always one of the bravest, most robust, and most experienced men in the service; he knows, with the utmost exactness, the distance of places, the depth of rivers, the state of the fords, the thickness of the woods, and the extent of them; in a word, the whole face of the country in detail. His party is always adapted to the country in which the war is; sometimes it is entirely composed of horse, sometimes of foot, but generally of a mixture of both. He has the management of the intelligence and direction of the spies. He is likewise limited to no number of troops; sometimes he has 1000 men, sometimes 200. In time of real danger, he has generally about 300, all picked from the whole army at his pleasure; he had not now above 50 horse, as it was not yet thought to be the time of real business or danger.

* Literally, *front of the army*.—T.

As the post of Fit-Auraris is a place of great trust, so it is endowed with proportionable emoluments. The king's Fit-Auraris has territories assigned him in every province that he ever passes through, so has that of the Ras, if he commands in chief. Every governor of a province has also an officer of this name, who has a revenue allowed him within his own province. It is a place of great fatigue. Their post is at different distances from the van of the army, according to the circumstances of the war; sometimes a day's march, sometimes four or six hours. As he passes on he fixes a lance, with a flag upon it, in the place where the king's tent is to be pitched that night, or where he is to halt that day. He has couriers, or light runners, through which he constantly corresponds with the army; whenever he sees the enemy, he sends immediate advice, and falls back himself, or advances farther, according as his orders are.

From Tsoomwa the king marched on, a short day's march to Derdera, and encamped near the church of St Michael. Derdera was a collection of small villages, between the lake Dembea and Court-ohha, where, it will be remembered, the agreement was, the confederates should inclose Michael, and give him battle; but he had now lost all patience, as there was no appearance of either Gusho or Powussen; and being, besides in an enemy's country, he began to proceed in his usual manner, by giving orders to lay waste the whole adjacent territory with fire and sword. The whole line of march, two day's journey in breadth from the lake, was set on fire; the people who could not escape were slain, and every wanton barbarity permitted.

The king's passage of the Nile was the signal given for me to set out to join him. It was the 18th of May, at noon, I left Emfras, my course being south-

ward whilst in the plain of Mitraha. At three o'clock we entered among a few hills of no consideration, and, soon after, began to coast close along the side of the lake Tzana. We saw this day a great number of hippopotami; some swimming in the lake at a small distance, some rising from feeding on the high grass in the meadows, and walking, seemingly at great leisure, till they plunged themselves out of sight. They are exceeding cautious and shy while on land, and not to be approached near enough to do execution with the best rifle-gun. At four in the afternoon we halted, and passed the night at Lamgue, a village situated a few paces from the side of the lake.

On the 19th of May we left Lamgue, about six in the morning, our course south and by west; and at eight we found ourselves in the middle of twenty five or thirty villages, called Nabca, stretching for the length of seven or eight miles; a few minutes afterwards we came to the river Reb, which falls into the lake a little north-west of the place where we now were. Close by where the Reb joins the lake is a small village of Pagans, called Waito, who live quite separate from the Abyssinians, and are held by them in utter abhorrence; so that to touch them, or any thing that belongs to them, makes a man unclean all that day till the evening, separates him from his family and friends, and excludes him from the church and all divine service, till he is washed and purified on the following day. Part of this aversion is certainly owing to their manner of feeding; for their only profession is killing the crocodile and hippopotamus which they make their daily sustenance. They have a most abominable stench, are exceedingly wan, or ill-coloured, very lean, and die often, as is said, of the lousy disease. There are, indeed, no crocodiles in the lake Tzana, owing, as it is said, to the cataracts, which

they cannot get up. However, as they are amphibious animals, and walk very well on shore, I think they might surmount this difficulty as easily as the hippopotamus; I rather think the cause is the coldness of the water and climate, which does not agree with the crocodile, but much with the river horse.

The Waito speak a language radically different from any of those in Abyssinia; but though I have often endeavoured to get some insight into this, their religion, and customs, I could never so far succeed as to be able to give the public any certain information. A false account in such cases, is certainly worse than no account at all. I once desired the king to order that one of them might be brought to Gondar. Two men, an old and a young one, were accordingly brought from the lake; but they would neither answer nor understand any questions; partly, I believe, through fear, partly from obstinacy. The king at this became so angry, that he ordered them both to be hanged: They seemed perfectly unconcerned; and it was with some difficulty I procured their release; I never, therefore, made an experiment of that kind afterwards. The Abyssinians believe they are sorcerers, can bewitch with their eyes, and occasion death by their charms, even at a considerable distance. It is likely, if that had been so, these two would have tried their power upon me; of which I do not recollect to have ever been sensible.

We passed the Reb at nine o'clock in the morning. It rises high in the mountains of Begemder, and is one of those rivers that continue running the whole year, and has a tolerable ford, although it was visibly increased by rain. We continued our journey in sight of many villages, till, three quarters after twelve, we came to the river Gomara, where we staid in search of trees and herbs the rest of the day. At night we

received a message from Ayto Adigo, Shum, or governor, of Karoota. He was an officer of confidence of the Iteghe's; had been a great friend of Mariam Barea's, one of whose vassals he was, and in his heart an inveterate enemy to Ras Michael and the new succession. Ever since the murder of Joas, he had not ventured to Gondar. When I first came there, the Ras had given his house, as that of an outlaw, to me. Afterwards, as soon as he returned, I offered immediately to surrender it to him; but he would not by any means, accept it, but asked leave to pitch his tent in one of the courts surrounded with walls; for it was a spacious building. Perhaps it was the best situation he could have chosen; for we did him great service by means of Ozoro Esther, as he was but very ill looked upon, and was rich enough to be considered as an object of Ras Michael's rapacity and avarice. Our neighbourhood occasioned us to pass many evenings together, and we contracted a friendship, the rather because he was a servant of the Iteghe, and we were known favourites of Ozoro Esther.

CHAP. IV.

Pass the River Gomara—Remarkable Accident there—Arrive at Dara—Visit the great Cataract of Alata—Leave Dara, and resume our Journey.

On the 20th of May, between six and seven in the morning, as Adigo was not arrived, I sent the baggage and tents that we had with us forward with Strates, a Greek, who was an avowed enemy to all learned inquiries or botanical researches. My orders were to encamp at Dara, in some convenient place near the house of Negade Ras Mahomet. In the mean time I staid, expecting Ayto Adigo's arrival; he came near eleven o'clock. As a temporary shelter from the sun, a cloak upon cross sticks was set up, instead of a tent, to save time. We sat down together to such fare as Adigo had brought along with him; it was a soldier's dinner, coarse and plentiful. Adigo told me Kasmati Ayabdar, an uncle of Gusho, had left his house the night before, accompanied by the men of Foggora, the country where we then were, of which he was governor, and had taken the high road to join the forces of Begemder.

Netcho, a near relation of the old queen, arrived from Kuara just as we were sitting down to dinner. He had about 50 horse and 200 foot, all bad troops, and ill armed; he was, however, a respectable tried

veteran, who having had many opportunities of becoming rich, gave the whole to his soldiers, and those of his dependents that lived with him; on which account he was extremely beloved, and it was hoped that, if the issue of this campaign was favourable, Ras Michael would make him governor of Kuara, in room of Coque Abou Barea, a man of a very different character, who had intruded himself into that province by the power of Fasil, and afterwards maintained himself in it by open rebellion.

The mules that had hitherto carried my quadrant and telescopes being bad, I had luckily kept them behind, in hopes that either Adigo or Netcho would supply me with better; and I had now placed them upon the fresh mules I had obtained, and had not sent them on with the servants, and we were then taking a friendly glass. It was, I suppose, about noon, when we saw our servants coming back, and Strates also among the rest, stript of every thing that he had, except a cotton night-cap, which he wore on his head. The servants swam over the Gomara immediately, nor was Strates interrupted, but passed at the ford. They told us, that Gusho and Powussen were in rebellion against the king, and confederated with Fasil; that they were advancing fast to cut off the Ras's retreat to Gondar; and that Guebra Mehedin, and Confu, Powussen's Fit-Auraris, had fallen in with our servants, and plundered them, as belonging to the king and the Ras.

I was for some minutes in the utmost astonishment at this torrent of bad news. Whether the others knew more than I, it is impossible to say; dissimulation, in all ranks of these people, is as natural as breathing. Guebra Mehedin and Confu were the Iteghe's two nephews, sons of Basha Eusebius, her brother; a worthless man, and his sons no better. They were young men, however, whom I saw continually

at the queen's palace, and to whom I should have gone immediately without fear. If I had known their houses had been in my way, that is, near Lebec, at the hot wells; notwithstanding their rank, they were of such dissipated manners, that they were of no account, but treated as castaways in the house of the queen, their aunt, and never, as far as I knew, had entered into the presence of the king. I had often eaten and drunk with them, however, in the house of Ayto Engedan, their cousin german, who was gone off with Welleta Israel, his aunt, at the passage of the Nile, as before mentioned. They had beat Strates who was their intimate acquaintance, violently: as also two others of my servants, to make them confess in what package the gold was. They had taken from them also a large blunderbuss, given me by the Swedish consul, Brander, at Algiers; a pair of pistols, a doubled-barrelled gun, and a Turkish sword mounted with silver, which, as there was then no prospect of their being immediately needed, were sent forward with the baggage.

Netcho and Adigo, and all present, agreed that the whole was a fiction, and that, supposing the account to be true that Begemder and Amhara were in rebellion, young, wild, and worthless people, like Guebra Meh din and Confu, could never be those pitched upon for the respectable office of Fit-Auraris. The worst that could be, as they conceived, was, that some misunderstanding might subsist between Ras Michael and the governors above named; but Fasil was undoubtedly the enemy of them all. They imagined, therefore, that this disgust, if any, would be soon got over; and concluded, that it was highly absurd, in any case, to attack me, as they certainly knew that the queen, Powussen, and Gusho, would be full as ill-pleased with it as the king or Ras Michael. It there-

fore appeared to them, as it also did to me, that these wild young men had taken the first surmise of a rebellion, as a pretence for robbing all that came in their way; and that I, unfortunately, had been the first.

We were in the middle of this conversation when the parties appeared. They had, perhaps, an hundred horse, and were scattered about a large plain, skirmishing, playing, pursuing one another, shrieking, and hooping, like so many frantic people. They stopt, however, upon coming nearer, seeing the respectable figure that we made, just ready to pass the ford, which alone divided us. Our servants had neither seen Netcho nor Adigo when they left us in the morning, though they knew Adigo was expected; and these marauders hoped to have intercepted me, thinly accompanied, as they had done my baggage.

Guebra Mehedin and his brother approached nearer the banks than the rest, and a servant was sent from them, who crossed the river to us, upbraiding Ayto Adigo with protecting a Frank proscribed by the laws of their country, and also with marching to the assistance of Ras Michael, the murderer of his sovereign; offering, at the same time, to divide the spoil with him, if he would surrender me and mine to him. Servants here, who carry messages in time of war between the contending parties, are held sacred like heralds. They are sent even with insults and defiances; but it is constantly understood, that their errand protects them from suffering any harm, whether on the road, or when in words they perform these foolish useless commissions.

Adigo and Netcho were above observing this punctilio with robbers. Some were for cutting the servant's ears off, and some for carrying him bound to Ras Michael; I begged they would let him go: and Netcho sent word by him to Guebra Mehedin, to get

the goods and mules he had robbed us of together, for he was coming over to share them with him. The servants having given the messenger a severe drubbing with sticks, torn the cloth from about his middle, and twisted it about his neck like a cord, in that plight sent him back to Guebra Mehedin; and we all prepared to take the ford across the river. Guebra Mehedin, who saw his servant thus disgraced returning towards him, and a considerable motion among the troops, advanced a few steps with two or three more of his company, stretching forth his hand, and crying out, but still at a distance that we could not hear. He was distinguished by a red sash of silk twisted about his head. I, with my servants and attendants, first passed the river at the ford; and I had no sooner got up the bank, and stood upon firm ground, than I fired two shots at him; the one, from a Turkish rifle, seemed to have given him great apprehensions, or else to have wounded him; for, after four or five of his people had flocked about him, they galloped all off across the plain of Foggora towards Lebec.

Netcho had passed the Gomara close after me, crying upon me to let him go first; but Adigo declared his resolution to go no farther. He hated Ras Michael; was a companion of Powussen and Gusho, as well as a neighbour, and wished for a revolution with all his heart. He, therefore, returned to Emfras and Karoota, and with him I sent five of my servants, desiring him to escort my quadrant, clock, and telescopes, into the island of Mitraha, and deliver them to Tecla Georgis, the king's servant, governor of that island. Adigo, being left alone with the servants, could not be persuaded but some great treasure was hid in those boxes. He, therefore, carried them to his house, and used the servants well; but opened and examined every one of the packages. Surprised to find nothing

but iron and rusty brass, he closed them again, and delivered them safely to Tecla Georgis, to be kept at Mitraha for that campaign.

Delivered now from the embarrassment of my baggage, by the industry of Guebra Mehedin, and of my cases and boxes by my own inclination, we set out with Netcho, to take up our quarters with Negade Ras Mahomet at Dara, where we arrived in the afternoon, having picked up one of our mules in the way, with a couple of carpets and some kitchen furniture upon it, all the rest being carried off.

The object which now first presented itself, and called our attention, was Strates in a night-cap, in other respects perfectly naked, with a long gun upon his shoulder, without powder or shot, but prancing and capering about in a great passion, and swearing a number of Greek oaths, which nobody there understood a word of but myself. This spectacle was rather diverting for some minutes; at last Netcho, though I believe he was not over-well provided, gave him an upper cloak to wrap round him. It was not then warm, indeed, but it was not very cold. After recovering the mule, he got on between the panniers, and I advised him to put the smallest carpet about him, which he soon after did: He had not yet spoke a word to me from sullenness.

"Strates," said I, "my good friend, lay aside that long gun, for you will fall and break it; besides, it hath not been charged since it was fired at Guebra Mehedin. If you carry it to strike terror, it is altogether unnecessary; for, if we had dressed you as you are now accoutred, when we sent you forward with the baggage to Dara, there is not a thief in all Begemder would have ventured to come near you." He looked at me with a countenance full of anger and contempt, though he said nothing; but, in Greek,

pronounced anathemas against the father of Guebra Mehedin, according to the Greek form of cursing. "Curse himself and his brother," said I, "and not his father; for he has been dead these twenty years." "I will curse whom I please," says he, in a great passion; "I curse his father, himself, and his brother, the Ras, and the king, and every body that has brought me into such a scrape as I have been in to-day. I have been stripped naked, and within an inch of having my throat cut, besides being gelded; and well may you laugh now at the figure I make. If you had seen those damned crooked knives, with their black hands, all begging, as if it had been for charity, to be allowed to do my business, you would have been glad for my making no worse figure to-night than I do with this carpet upon my head."

"My dear Strates," said I, "it is the fortune of war, and many princes and great men, who, at this moment I am speaking to you, live in the enjoyment of every thing they can desire, before a month expires, perhaps, will be stretched on the cold ground, a prey to the birds and wild beasts of the field, without so much as a carpet to cover them, such as you have. You, as yet, are only frightened; though, it is true, a man may be as well killed as frightened to death." "Sir," says he, in a violent rage, "that I deny, it is not the same; a man that is killed feels no more, but he that is frightened to death, as I have been to-day, suffers ten thousand times more than if he had been killed outright." "Well," said I, "Strates, I will not dispute with you; I believe they suffer much the same after they are dead; but you, I thank God, have only lost your clothes, and you are now most comfortably, though not ornamentally, wrapped up in my carpet; as soon as we get to Dara, you shall be dressed from head to foot, by Negade

Ras Mahomet, at the expence of the king, in better clothes than you ever wore in your life, at least since I knew you; only give me your gun till your passion is allayed; you know it is a valuable one, which I never quit."

He then gave me the gun suddenly enough; and I continued, "I will, this very night, present you with one of the handsomest Turkish sashes that Mahomet has to sell. I saw him in the king's house, with many new ones, that he had procured, a little before I went to Emfras." I cannot pretend to say whether his visage cleared up, for he was still perfectly hid with the carpet, as it began to grow cool, as well as dark; but the sight of the lights in the houses of Dara, and the promise of the new clothes and the sash, had very much softened his voice and expressions.

"Sir," says he, bringing his mule close up to mine, "now you are not in a passion; one may speak to you. Do you think, that it is not tempting Providence to come so far from your own country to seek these d—n'd weeds and flowers, at the risk of having your throat cut every hour of the day, and, what is worse, my throat cut too, and of being gelded into the bargain? Are there no weeds, and bogs, and rivers in your own country? What have you to do with that damn'd Nile, where he rises, or, whether he rises at all, or not? What will all those trees and branches do for you, when these horrid blacks have done your business, as they were near doing mine." He then made a sign towards his girdle with his fingers, which made me understand what he meant—"Nile!" says he, "curse upon his father's head the day that he was born."

"Strates," replied I, gravely, "he has no father and was never born. '*Fertur sine teste creatus*,' says the poet." "There's your Latin again; the poet is

an ass and a blockhead, let him be who he will," continued Strates; "and I do maintain, whether you be angry, or not, that at Stanchio and Scio there are finer trees than ever you saw, or will see, in Abyssinia.—There is a tree," says he, "that fifty men like you, spreading all your hands round about, would not be able to grasp it. Nay, it is not a tree, it is but half a tree; it is as old, I believe, as Methuselah: Did you ever see it?"—"I tell you, friend Strates," said I, "I never was at Scio in my life, and, therefore, could not see it." "Nor at Stanchio?"—"Yes, I have been at Stanchio, and have seen the large plane-tree there. I believe it may be about eighteen or twenty feet in circumference." "Galen and Hippocrates lived," adds he, "there together, 2000 years before our Saviour: Did you ever hear that?"—"I have read," said I, "Strates, that about 500 years before Christ, Hippocrates did live there; but Galen was not born till 200 years after Christ. I do not recollect if he was ever at Stanchio; but, surely, never lived there with Hippocrates."

Strates was in the middle of a declaration, that those were all falsehoods of Latins and Papists; and we were ascending, composedly enough, through a narrow, rocky road, thick covered with high trees and bushes, when, just before our entrance into the village of Dara, a gun was fired, and the ball distinctly heard passing through the leaves among the branches. This occasioned a great alarm to our disputant, who immediately supposed that Guebra Mehedin, and all his robbers, were there expressly waiting for us; nor was he the only person that felt uneasily. Netcho, myself, and the generality of his officers, thought this was more than probable; we all, therefore dismounted, loaded our fire-arms, halted till our stragglers came up, and consulted what we were to do,

Strates, though tired and naked, found it was better to go back under his carpet, and, if possible, overtake Ayto Adigo, than take possession of his new clothes from Negade Ras Mahomet, with the risk of meeting Guebra Mehedin there. In vain I remonstrated to him, that he, of all others, had nothing to lose but Netcho's old cloak and the carpet. His fears, however, made him think otherwise, nor could he banish his apprehensions of the crooked knives, and what he called the operation. Netcho having ordered and conversed with his men in his own language, which I did not understand, said after, with great composure and firm tone of voice, "That he had come to lodge in the market-place of Dara that night, and would not be put out of his quarters by boys of the character of Mehedin and Confu; that, in his present circumstances, with the few troops he had, he did not seek to fight; but even with this force, such as it was, if attacked, he would not decline it." Whatever country, or whatever distance of time and place heroes live at, their hearts are always in unison, and speak the same language on similar and great occasions. There old Netcho, without ever having heard of Shakespeare, repeated the very words that, 300 years ago, our great king Henry V. did before the battle of Agincourt:

> The sum of all my answer is but this—
> We would not seek a battle as we are;
> Yet, as we are, we say we will not shun it.
> So tell your master——
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

We had not advanced but a few paces, before two men of the town came to us; the noise of our approach had been heard, and all the dogs had been barking for half an hour. Soon after arrived a son of Negade Ras Mahomet, who assured us all was in

peace; that they had been expecting us and Ayto Adigo with us; that he heard nothing of Guebra Mehedin, only that he had retreated with great precipitation homewards across the plain, as they apprehended, from fear of the approach of our party. He had, indeed, for some days been guilty of great irregularities; had slain two men, and wounded the son of Mahomet, the Shum, or chief of Alata, in attempting to take from him the revenue due from that territory to the king; after which they had been beat back by Mahomet without their booty, and nothing more was known of them.

This brought us to Negade Ras Mahomet's house, who killed a cow for Netcho, or rather allowed him to kill one for himself; for it is equal to a renunciation of Christianity to eat meat when the beast is slaughtered by a Mahometan. Strates, who from his infancy, in his own country, had fared on nothing else, was not so scrupulous, though he concealed it; he therefore had a very hearty supper privately with Negade Ras Mahomet and his family, who very willingly promised to get his new clothes ready by the next morning.

As I was myself, however full of thoughts upon the difficulties and dangers I was already engaged in, and of the prospect of still greater before me, I had no stomach for either of their suppers, but ordered some coffee, and went to bed. After I lay down, I desired Negade Ras Mahomet to come to me; and, when we were alone, I interrogated him if he knew any thing of the rebellion in Begemder. At first he declared he did not; he laughed at the notion of Guebra Mehedin and Confu being Fit-Auraris to Gusho and Powussen, and said, that either of these generals would hang them the first time they came into their hands. He told me, however, that Woodage Asahel had been

assembling troops, and had committed some cruelties upon the king's servants in Maitsha; but this, he imagined, was at the instigation of Fasil; for he never was known to have been connected either with Powussen or Gusho. He told me after, under the seal of secrecy, that Ras Michael had halted two days at Derdera; that, upon a message he had received from Begemder, he had broke out into violent passions against Gusho and Powussen, calling them liars and traitors, in the openest manner; that a council had been held at Derdera, in presence of the king, where it was in deliberation whether the army should not turn short into Begemder, to force that province to join them; but that it was carried, for the sake of the Agows, to send Powussen a summons to join him for the last time; that, in the meanwhile, they should march straight, with the greatest diligence, to meet Fasil, and give him battle, then return, and reduce to proper subordination both Begemder and Amhara.

This was the very worst news I could possibly receive, according to the resolutions that I had then taken; for I was within about fourteen miles of the great cataract, and it was probable I never again should be so near, were it even always accessible; to pass, therefore, without seeing it, was worse, in my own thoughts, than any danger that could threaten me.

Negade Ras Mahomet was a sober plain man, of excellent understanding, and universal good character for truth and integrity; and, as such, very much in the favour both of the king and Ras Michael. I therefore opened my intentions to him without reserve, desiring his advice how to manage this excursion to the cataract. "Unless you had told me you was resolved," says he, with a grave air, though full of openness and

candour, "I would, in the first place, have advised you not to think of such an undertaking; these are unsettled times; all the country is bushy, wild, and uninhabited, quite to Alata; and though Mahomet, the Shum, is a good man, my friend, and relation, and the king reposes trust in him, as he does in me, yet Alata itself is at any time but a bad straggling place; there are now many strangers, and wild people there, whom Mahomet has brought to his assistance, since Guebra Mehedin made the attack upon him. If, then, any thing was to befal you, what should I answer to the king and the Iteghe? it would be said, the Turk has betrayed him; though, God knows, I was never capable of betraying your dog, and rather would be poor all my life, than the richest man of the province by doing the like wrong, even if the bad action was never to be revealed, or known, unless to my own heart."

"Mahomet," said I, "you need not dwell on these professions; I have lived twelve years with people of your religion, my life always in their power, and I am now in your house, in preference to being in a tent out of doors, with Netcho and his Christians. I do not ask you whether I am to go or not, for that is resolved on; and though you are a Mahometan, and I a Christian, no religion teaches a man to do evil. We both agree in this, that God, who has protected me thus far, is capable to protect me likewise at the cataract, and farther, if he has not determined otherwise, for my good; I only ask you, as a man who knows the country, to give me your best advice, how I may satisfy my curiosity in this point, with as little danger, and as much expedition as possible, leaving the rest to heaven."—"Well," says he, "I shall do so. I think, likewise, for your comfort, that, barring unforeseen accidents, you may do it at this time, without great

danger. Guebra Mehedin will not come between this town and Alata, because we are all one people, and the killing two men, and wounding Mahomet's son, makes him a *dimmenia* *. At Alata, he knows the Shum is ready to receive him as he deserves; and he is himself afraid of Kasmati Ayabdar, with whom he is as deep in guilt as with us, and here, he well knows, he dare not venture for many reasons." "Ayabdar," said I, "passed the Karoota three days ago." "Well, well," replied Mahomet, "so much the better. Ayabdar has the leprosy, and goes every year once, sometimes twice, to the hot wells at Lebec; they must pass near one another, and that is the reason Guebra Mehedin has assembled all these banditti of horse about him. He is a beggar, and a spendthrift; a fortnight ago he sent to me to borrow twenty ounces of gold. You may be sure I did not lend it him; he is too much in my debt already; and I hope Ras Michael will give you his head in your hand before winter, for the shameful action he has been guilty of to you and yours this day."

"Woodage Asahel," said I, "what say you of him?" "Why, you know," replied Mahomet, "nobody can inform you about his motions, as he is perpetually on horseback, and never rests night nor day; however, he has no business on this side of the water, the rather that he must be sure Ras Michael, when he passed here, took with him all the king's money that I had in my hands. When day-light is fairly come, for we do not know the changes a night may produce in this country, take half a dozen of your servants; I will send with you my son, and four of my servants; you will call at Alata, go down and see the

* Guilty of our blood, and subject to the laws of retaliation.

cataract, but do not stay, return immediately, and, *Ullah Kerim*,—God is merciful."

I thanked my kind landlord, and let him go; but, recollecting, called him again, and asked, "What shall I do with Netcho? how shall I rejoin him? my company is too small to pass Maitsha without him." "Sleep in peace," says he, "I will provide for that; I tell you in confidence, the king's money is in my hands, and was not ready when the Ras passed; my son is but just arrived with the last of it this evening, tired to death; I send the money by Netcho, and my son too, with forty stout fellows, well armed, who will die in your service, and not run away like those vagabond Christians, in whom you must place no confidence, if danger presents itself, but immediately throw yourself among the Mahometans. Besides, there are about fifty soldiers, most of them from Tigre, Michael's men, that have been loitering here these two days. It was one of these that fired the gun just before you came, which alarmed Netcho; so that when you are come back in safety from the cataract, they shall be, by that time, all on their march to the passage. My son shall mount with you; I fear the Nile will be too deep, but when once you are at Tsoomwa, you may set your mind at rest, and bid defiance to Woodage Asahel, who knows his enemy always before he engages him, and at this time will not venture to interrupt your march."

As I have mentioned the name of this person so often, it will be necessary to observe, that he was, by origin, a Galla, but born in Damot, of the clan Elmana, or Densa, two tribes settled there in the time of Yasous I.; that he was the most intrepid and active partizan in his time, and had an invincible hatred to Ras Michael; nor was there any love lost betwixt them. It is impossible to conceive with what velocity he mo-

ved, sometimes with 200 horse, sometimes with half that number. He was constantly falling upon some part of Michael's army, whether marching or encamped; the blow once struck, he disappeared in a minute. When he wanted to attempt something great, he had only to summon his friends and acquaintance in the country, and he had then a little army, which dispersed as soon as the business was done. It was Ras Michael's first question to the spies; "Where was Woodage Asahel last night?" a question they very seldom could answer with certainty. He was in his person too tall for a good horseman, yet he was expert in this qualification by constant practice. His face was yellow, as if he had the jaundice, and much pitted with the small-pox; his eyes small, staring, and fiery; his nose as it were broken, his mouth large, his chin long and turned up at the end; he spoke very fast, but not much, and had a very shy, but ill-designing look. In his character, he was avaricious, treacherous, inexorable, and cruel to a proverb; in short, he was allowed to be the most merciless robber and murderer that age had produced in all Abyssinia *.

Wearied with thinking, and better reconciled to my expedition, I fell into a sound sleep. I was awakened by Strates in the morning (the 21st of May), who, from the next room, had heard all the conversation between me and Negade Ras, and began now to think that there was no safety but in the camp of the king. I will not repeat his wise expostulations against going to the cataract. We were rather late, and I paid lit-

* The engraved portrait of this barbarian, which was taken at Gondar, several months after, in the time of Socinios the Waragna, is given in the volume of plates. He is there represented with the horn usually worn by Casmati's.—E.

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tle regard to them. After coffee, I mounted my horse, with five servants on horseback, all resolute, active young fellows, armed with lances in the fashion of their country. I was joined that moment by a son of Mahomet on a good horse, armed with a short gun, and pistols at his belt, with four of his servants, Mahometans, stout men, each having his gun, and pistols at his girdle, and a sword hung over his shoulder, mounted upon four good mules, swifter and stronger than ordinary horses. We galloped all away, and were out of sight in a short time. We then pursued our journey with diligence, but not in a hurry; we went first to a hilly and rocky country, full of trees, mostly of unknown kinds, and all of the greatest beauty possible, having flowers of a hundred different colours and forms upon them; many of the trees were loaded with fruit, and many with both fruit and flowers. I was truly sorry to be obliged to pass them without more distinct notice; but we had no time, as the distance to the cataract was not absolutely certain, and the cataract then was our only object.

After passing the plain, we came to a brisk stream which rises in Begemder, passes Alata, and throws itself into the Nile below the cataract. They told me it was called Mariam Ohha; and, a little farther, on the side of a green hill, having the rock appearing on some parts of it, stands Alata, a considerable village, with several smaller, to the south and west. Mahomet, our guide, rode immediately up to the house where he knew the governor, or Shum, resided, for fear of alarming him; but we had already been seen at a considerable distance, and Mahomet and his servants known. All the people of the village surrounded the mules directly, paying each their compliments to the master and the servants; the same was immediately observed towards us; and as I saluted the

Shum in Arabic, his own language, we speedily became acquainted. Having overshot the cataract, the noise of which we had a long time distinctly heard, I resisted every entreaty that could be made to me to enter the house to refresh myself. I had imbibed part of Strates's fears about the unsettledness of the times, and all the kind invitations were to no purpose; I was, as it were, forced to comply, to refresh our horses.

I happened to be upon a very steep part of the hill, full of bushes; and one of the servants, dressed in the Arabian fashion, in a burnoose, and turban striped white and green, led my horse, for fear of slipping, till it got into the path leading to the Shum's door. I heard the fellow exclaiming in Arabic, as he led the horse, "Good Lord! to see you here! Good God! to see you here!" I asked him who he was speaking of, and what reason he had to wonder to see me there. "What, do you not know me?" I said I did not. "Why", replied he, "I was several times with you at Jidda. I saw you often with Captain Price and Captain Scott, with the Moor Yasine, and Mahomet Gibberti. I was the man that brought your letters from Metical Aga at Mecca, and was to come over with you to Masuah, if you had gone directly there, and had not proceeded to Yemen or Arabia Felix. I was on board the Lion, with the Indian nokeda (so they call the captain of a country ship), when your little vessel, all covered with sail, passed with such briskness through the English ships, which all fired their cannon; and every body said, there is a poor man making a great haste to be assassinated among those wild people in Habbesh; and so we all thought." He concluded, "Drink! no force! Englishman, very good! G—d damn, drink!" We had just arrived, while my friend was uttering these exclama-

tion, at the place where the Shum and the rest were standing. The man continued repeating the same words, crying as loud as he could, with an air of triumph; while I was reflecting how shameful it was for us to make these profligate expressions, by frequent repetition, so easily acquired by strangers that knew nothing else of our language.

The Shum, and all about him, were in equal astonishment at seeing the man, to all appearance in a passion, bawling out words they did not understand; but he, holding a horn in his hand, began louder than before, "Drink! very good! Englishman!" shaking the horn in the Shum his master's face. Mahomet of Alata was a very grave, composed man: "I do declare," says he, "Ali is become mad: Does any body know what he says or means?" "That I do" said I, "and will tell you by-and-bye; he is an old acquaintance of mine, and is speaking English; let us make a hasty meal, however, with any thing you have to give us."

Our horses were immediately fed; bread, honey, and butter served: Ali had no occasion to cry, drink; it went about plentifully, and I would stay no longer, but mounted my horse, thinking every minute that I tarried might be better spent at the cataract. The first thing they carried us to, was the bridge, which consists of one arch, of about twenty-five feet broad, the extremities of which were strongly let into, and rested on, the solid rock on both sides; but fragments of the parapets remained, and the bridge itself seemed to bear the appearance of frequent repairs, and many attempts to ruin it; otherwise, in its construction, it was exceedingly commodious. The Nile here is confined between two rocks, and runs in a deep trough, with great roaring and impetuous velocity. We were told no crocodiles were ever seen so high,

and were obliged to remount the stream above half a mile before we came to the cataract, through trees and bushes of the same beautiful and delightful appearance with those we had seen near Dara.

The cataract itself was the most magnificent sight that ever I beheld. The height has been rather exaggerated. The missionaries say, the fall is about sixteen ells, or fifty feet. The measuring is, indeed, very difficult; but, by the position of long sticks, and poles of different lengths, at different heights of the rock, from the water's edge, I may venture to say, that it is nearer forty feet than any other measure. The river had been considerably increased by rains, and fell in one sheet of water, without any interval, above half an English mile in breadth, with a force and noise that was truly terrible, and which stunned and made me, for a time, perfectly dizzy. A thick fume, or haze, covered the fall all round, and hung over the course of the stream both above and below, marking its track, though the water was not seen. The river, though swelled with rain, preserved its natural clearness, and fell, as far as I could discern, into a deep pool, or bason, in the solid rock, which was full, and in twenty different eddies to the very foot of the precipice; the stream when it fell, seeming part of it to run back with great fury upon the rock, as well as forward in the line of its course, raising a wave, or violent ebullition, by chafing against each other.

Jerome Lobo pretends, that he has sat under the curve, or arch, made by the projectile force of the water rushing over the precipice. He says he sat calmly at the foot of it, and looking through the curve of the stream, as it was falling, saw a number of rainbows of inconceivable beauty in this extraordinary prism. This, however, I, without hesitation, aver to be a downright falsehood. A deep pool of water, as I mention-

ed, reaches to the very foot of the rock, and is in perpetual agitation. Now, allowing that there was a seat, or bench, which there is not, in the middle of the pool, I do believe it absolutely impossible, by any exertion of human strength, to have arrived at it. Although a very robust man, in the prime and vigour of life, and a hardy, practised, indefatigable swimmer, I am perfectly confident I could not have got to that seat from the shore through the quietest part of that bason. And, supposing the friar placed in his imaginary seat, under the curve of that immense arch of water, he must have had a portion of firmness, more than falls to the share of ordinary men, and which is not likely to be acquired in a monastic life, to philosophise upon optics in such a situation, where every thing would seem, to his dazzled eyes, to be in motion, and the stream, in a noise like the loudest thunder, to make the solid rock (at least as to sense) shake to its very foundation, and threaten to tear every nerve to pieces, and to deprive one of other senses besides that of hearing. It was a most magnificent sight, that ages, added to the greatest length of human life, would not efface or eradicate from my memory; it struck me with a kind of stupor, and a total oblivion of where I was, and of every other sublunary concern. It was one of the most magnificent, stupendous sights in the creation, though degraded and vilified by the lies of a grovelling fanatic priest.

I was awakened from one of the most profound reveries that ever I fell into, by Mahomet, and by my friend Drink, who now put to me a thousand impertinent questions. It was after this I measured the fall, and believe, within a few feet, it was the height I have mentioned; but I confess I could at no time in my life less promise upon precision; my reflection was suspended or subdued; and, while in sight of the

fall, I think I was under a temporary alienation of mind; it seemed to me as if one element had broke loose from, and become superior to, all laws of subordination; that the fountains of the great deep were again extraordinarily opened, and the destruction of a world was once more begun by the agency of water.

It was now half an hour past one o'clock, the weather perfectly good; it had rained very little that day, but threatened a showery evening; I peremptorily refused returning back to Alata, which our landlord importuned us to. He gave us a reason that he thought would have weight with us, that he, too, had his meery, or money, to send to the king, which would be ready the next morning as early as we pleased. The mention of to-morrow morning brought all my engagements and their consequences into my mind, and made me give a flat refusal, with some degree of peevishness and ill-humour. I had soon after found, that he had otherwise made up this affair with Mahomet, our guide; but being resolute, and, a moment after, taking leave of our kind Shum, we were joined by Seide his eldest son, and our English friend Drink, each upon a mule, with two servants on foot; his father, as he said, being unwilling to spare more people, as the whole inhabitants of Alata, their neighbours and friends, intended soon to surprise Guebra Mehedin, if a feasible opportunity offered.

Though we went briskly, it was past five before we arrived at Dara. Netcho had not stirred, and had procured another cow from Mahomet, of which all the strangers and soldiers who remained partook. Mahomet, I believe, out of kindness to me, had convinced them of the necessity of taking along with them

the Shum of Alata's money; and Netcho well knew that those who brought any part of the revenue to Ras Michael were always received kindly; and he was not interested enough in the cause to make more haste than necessary to join the king.

Strates was completely clothed, and received his sash upon my arrival. He feigned to be wonderfully hurt at my having left him behind in my excursion to the cataract. At supper I began to question him, for the first time, what had happened to him with Guebra Mehedin. "Sure, Strates," said I, "you two were once friends; I have dined with you together many a time at Ayto Engedan's, and often seen you with him in Gondar."—"Gondar!" says he, "I have known him these fourteen years, when he was a child in his father Basha Eusebius's house; he was always playing amongst us at his uncle Kasmati Eshte's; he was just one of us; nay, he is not now twenty-six."

Strates proceeded—"We were crossing the plain below Dara, and not being inclined to go into the town without you, we made to a large daroo tree, and set down to rest ourselves till you should come up. As the ground was somewhat elevated, we saw several horses in the bed of a torrent where there was no water running, and, when these were pulled up the bank, their masters got immediately upon them. I conceived the one with the red sash upon his head was Guebra Mehedin, and presently eight or ten naked people, armed with lances and shields, came out of the hole nearest me. I was surprised, and thought they might be robbers, and, kneeling down upon one knee, I presented the large blunderbuss at them. On this they all ran back to their hole, and fell flat on their faces; and they did well; I should have given them a confounded peppering."—"Cer-

tainly," said I, "there is little doubt of that."—"You may laugh," continued Strates; "but the first thing I saw near me was Confu and Guebra Mehedin, the one with a red, the other a kind of white fillet tied round his forehead. "O ho! friend," says Guebra Mehedin, "where are you going?" and held out his hand to me as kindly, familiarly, and cheerfully as possible. I immediately laid down my blunderbuss, and went to kiss his hand. You know they are the good old queen's nephews; and I thought if their house was near we should have good entertainment, and some merriment that night. I then saw one of their servants lift the blunderbuss from the ground, but apparently with fear, and the rest took possession of the mules and baggage. I began to ask Guebra Mehedin what this meant? and said accidentally, ente you! instead of speaking it entow, as you know they pronounce it to great people. Without further provocation he gave me a lash with his whip across the eyes, another behind took hold of your sword that was slung upon my shoulders, and would have strangled me with the cord if I had not fallen backwards; they all began then to strip me. I was naked in a minute as I was the hour I was born, having only this night cap; when one of them, a tall black fellow, drew a crooked knife, and proposed to pay me a compliment that has made me shudder every time I have since thought of it. I don't know what would have been the end of it, if Confu had not said "Poh! he is a white man, and not worth the scarifying: Let us seek his master," says Guebra Mehedin, "he will by this have passed the Gomara; he has always plenty of gold both from the king and Iteghe, and is a real Frank, on which account it would be a sin to spare him." On this away they went skirmishing about the plain. Horsemen came to join

them from all parts, and every one that passed me gave me a blow of some kind or other None of them hurt me very much; but, no matter, I may have my turn: we shall see what figure he will make before the Iteghe some of these days, or, what is better, before Ras Michael."

"That you shall never see," says Negade Ras Mahomet, who entered the room in the instant; "for there is a man now without, who informs us, that Guebra Mehedin is either dead or just a-dying. A shot fired at him, by one of you at the Gomora, cut off part of his cheek-bone; the next morning he heard that Kasmati Ayabdar was going to the hot waters at Lebec with servants only, and the devil, to whom he belonged, would not quit him; he would persist, ill as he was, to attack Ayabdar, who having, unknown to him, brought a number of stout fellows along with him, without difficulty cut his servants to pieces. In the fray, Tecla Georgis, a servant who takes care of Ayabdar's horse, coming up with Guebra Mehedin himself, hurt as he was, struck him over the skull with a large crooked knife like a hatchet, and left him mortally wounded on the field, whence he was carried to a church, where he is now lying a miserable spectacle, and can never recover." Strates could hold no longer. He got up and danced as if he had been frantic; sometimes singing Greek songs, at another time pronouncing ten thousand curses, which he wished might overtake him in the other world. For my part, I felt very differently; for I had much rather, considering whose nephew he was, that he should have lived, than to have it said that he received his first wound, not a mortal one, indeed, but intended as such, from my hand.

CHAP. V.

Pass the Nile and encamp at Tsoomwa—Arrive at Derdera—Alarm on approaching the Army—Join the king at Karcagna.

On the 22d of May we were all equally desirous to resume our journey. We set out accordingly at six o'clock in the morning, ascended some hills covered, as the former ones, with trees and shrubs, utterly unknown to me, but of inexpressible beauty, and many of extraordinary fragrance. We continued ascending about three miles, till we came to the top of the ridge within sight of the lake. As we rose, the hills became more bare and less beautiful. We afterwards descended towards the passage, partly over steep banks which had been covered with bushes, all trodden down by the army, and which had made the access to the river exceedingly slippery. Here we saw the use of Mahomet's servants, three of whom, each with a lance in one hand, holding that of his companion in the other, waded across the violent stream, sounding with the end of their lances every step they took. The river was very deep, the current, I suppose, fifty yards broader than it was at the cataract; but the banks were, for a great way on each side, almost perfectly level, though much obstructed with

black stones. In the middle it was very deep, and the stream smooth, so that it was apparent our horses must swim. For my part, I did not like the smooth stones at the bottom, as a fall there would have been irrecoverable; and my horse was shod with iron, which is not usual in Abyssinia. I therefore resolved to swim where I could not wade; and, wrapping my clothes in a bundle, I gave them to a servant, who carried them over on his head. I then waded in, and found the water unexpectedly cold. Mahomet rode on a mule by my side, sometimes swimming, sometimes walking. I attempted to sound up towards the lake, and found it deeper there. I returned, therefore, being unwilling to try experiments, and, committing myself to the stream, swam to the other side, much comforted by the assurance that no crocodile passed the cataract.

The beasts having got over, the men followed much quicker; many women, going to join the army, swam over, holding the tails of the horses, and we were all on the other side before twelve o'clock; the beasts a good deal tired with the passage, the steepness of the access to it, and the still greater depth on the other side. For my part, I thought we could not have gone on to Tsoomwa, but it was carried against me. Tsoomwa is about twelve miles distant; and I suppose it was not much past three o'clock when we arrived there; which was very fortunate, as we had scarcely pitched our tents before a most terrible storm of rain, wind, and thunder overtook us. My tent was happily placed in one respect, being on a flat on the lee side of a hill, and sheltered from the storm; but, on the other hand, the water ran so plentifully from above, as quite to overflow it on the inside, till a trench was dug to carry it off.

Ras Michael had burnt nothing at Tsoomwa, though there was a house of Powussen's in the place, built by his father. But that dissembler, to prevent the worst, and carry on the farce to the uttermost, had sent many bags of flour, for the use of the King and the Ras, which were to be distributed to the army in case they wanted.

From the passage to Tsoomwa, all the country was forsaken; the houses uninhabited, the grass trodden down, and the fields without cattle. Every thing that had life and strength fled before that terrible leader, and his no less terrible army; a profound silence was in the fields around us, but no marks as yet of desolation. We kept strict watch in this solitude all that night. I took my turn till twelve, as I was the least fatigued of any. Netcho had picquets about a quarter of a mile on every side of us, with fire-arms to give the alarm.

On the 23d, about three in the morning, a gun was heard on the side towards the passage. This did not much alarm us, though we all turned out. In a few minutes came Ayto Adigo (not the Shum of Karoota, already mentioned, who left us at the Gomara), but a young nobleman of Begemder of great hopes, one of the gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber, and consequently my colleague. He intended to have brought four horses to the king, one of which he had drowned, or rather, as I afterwards understood, throttled, in passing the Nile at the mouth of the lake; and two men, the king's servants, had perished there likewise. He came in great hurry, full of the news from Begemder, and of the particulars of the conspiracy, such as have been already stated. With Ayto Adigo came the king's cook, Sebastos, an old Greek, near seventy, who had fallen sick from fatigue. After having satisfied his inquiries, and given him what refresh-

ment we could spare, he left Sebastos with us, and pursued his journey to the camp.

On the 24th, at our ordinary time, when the sun began to be hot, we continued our route due south, through a very plain, flat country, which, by the constant rains that now fell, began to stand in large pools, and threatened to turn all into a lake. We had hitherto lost none of our beasts of carriage, but we now were so impeded by streams, brooks, and quagmires, that we despaired of ever bringing one of them to join the camp. The horses, and beasts of burthen that carried the baggage of the army, and which had passed before us, had spoiled every ford, and we saw to day a number of dead mules lying about the fields, the houses all reduced to ruins, and smoking like so many kilns; even the grass, or wild oats, which were grown very high, were burnt in large plots of a hundred acres together; every thing bore the marks that Ras Michael was gone before, whilst not a living creature appeared in those extensive, fruitful, and once well-inhabited plains. An awful silence reigned everywhere around, interrupted only at times by thunder, now become daily, and the rolling of torrents, produced by local showers in the hills, which ceased with the rain, and were but the children of an hour. Amidst this universal silence that prevailed all over this scene of extensive desolation, I could not help remembering how finely Mr Gray paints the passage of such an army, under a leader like Ras Michael:

> Confusion in his van with Flight combined,
> And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

At Derdera we saw the church of St Michael, the only building which, in favour of his own name, the Ras had spared. It served us then for a very conve-

nient lodging, as much rain had fallen in the night, and the priests had all fled or been murdered. We had this evening, when it was clear, seen the mountain of Samseen. Our next stage from Derdera was Karcagna, a small village near the banks of the Jemma, about two miles from Samseen. We knew the king had resolved to burn it, and we expected to have seen the clouds of smoke arising from its ruins, but all was perfectly cool and clear; and this very much surprised us, considering the time he had to do this, and the great punctuality and expedition with which his army used to execute orders of this kind. As we advanced, we had seen a great number of dead mules and horses, and the hyænas so bold as only to leave the carcase for a moment, and snarl, as if they had regretted at seeing any of us pass alive.

Since passing the Nile, I found myself more than ordinarily depressed; my spirits were sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened since that period, more than what was expected before. This disagreeable situation of mind continued at night while I was in bed. The rashness and imprudence with which I had engaged myself in so many dangers, without any necessity for so doing; the little prospect of my being ever able to extricate myself out of them, or, even if I lost my life, of the account being conveyed to my friends at home; the great and unreasonable presumption which had led me to think that, after every one that had attempted this voyage had miscarried in it, I was the only person that was to succeed; all these reflections upon my mind, when relaxed, dozing, and half oppressed with sleep, filled my imagination with what I have heard other people call the *horrors*, the most disagreeable sensation I ever was conscious of, and which I then felt for the first time. Impatient of suffering any longer, I leaped out

of bed, and went to the door of the tent, where the outward air perfectly awakened me, and restored my strength and courage. All was still, and at a distance I saw several bright fires, but lower down, and more to the right than I expected, which made me think I was mistaken in the situation of Karcagna. It was then near four in the morning of the 25th. I called up my companions, happily buried in deep sleep, as I was desirous, if possible, to join the king that day. We accordingly were three or four miles from Derdera when the sun rose; there had been little rain that night, and we found very few torrents on our way; but it was slippery, and uneasy walking, the rich soil being trodden into a consistence like paste.

About seven o'clock, we entered upon the broad plain of Maitsha, and were fast leaving the lake. Here the country is, at least a great part of it, in tillage, and had been, in appearance, covered with plentiful crops; but all was cut down, by the army, for their horses, or trodden under foot, from carelessness or vengeance; so that a green blade could scarcely be seen. We saw a number of people this day, chiefly straggling soldiers, who, in parties of threes and fours, had been seeking, in all the bushes and concealed parts of the river, for the miserable natives, who had hid themselves thereabouts; in this they had many of them been successful. They had some of them three, some of them four women, boys and girls, who, though Christians like themselves, they nevertheless were carrying away into slavery, to sell them to the Turks for a very small price.

A little before nine we heard a gun fired, that gave us some joy, as the army seemed not to be far off; a few minutes after, we heard several dropping shots, and, in less than a quarter of an hour's time, a general firing began from right to left, which ceased for an

instant, and then was heard again as smart as ever, about the occasion of which we were divided in opinion.

Netcho was satisfied that Woodage Asahel, from Samseen, had fallen upon Ras Michael at Karcagna, to prevent his burning it, and that Fasil had strongly reinforced him, that he might be able to retard the army's march. On the other hand, having been informed by Ayto Adigo, that news were come to Gondar that Fasil had left Bure, and that Derdera was the place agreed on by Gusho and Powussen to shut up Michael on the rear, I thought that it was Fasil, to make good his part of his promise, who had crossed the Nile at Goutto, and attacked Ras Michael, before he suffered him to burn Samseen. Indeed we all agreed that both opinions were likely to be true, and that Fasil and Woodage Asahel would both attack the king at the same time. The firing continued much in the same way, rather slacker, but apparently advancing nearer us, a sure sign that our army was beaten and retreating. We, therefore, made ourselves ready, and mounted on horseback, that we might join them. Yet it was a thing appeared to us scarcely possible, that Fasil should beat Ras Michael so easily, and with so short a resistance.

We had not gone far in the plain before we had a sight of the enemy, to our very great surprise, and no small comfort. A multitude of deer, buffaloes, boars, and various other wild beasts, had been alarmed by the noise and daily advancing of the army, and gradually driven before them. The country was all overgrown with wild oats, a great many of the villages having been burnt the year before the inhabitants had abandoned them; in this shelter the wild beasts had taken up their abodes in very great numbers. When the army pointed towards Karcagna to

the left, the silence and solitude on the opposite side made them turn to the right, to where the Nile makes a semicircle, the Jemma being behind them, and much overflowed. When the army, therefore, instead of marching south and by east towards Samseen, had turned their course north-west, their faces towards Gondar, they had fallen in with these innumerable herds of deer and other beasts, who, confined between the Nile, the Jemma, and the lake, had no way to return but that by which they had come. These animals, finding men in every direction in which they attempted to pass, became desperate with fear, and not knowing what course to take, fell a prey to the troops. The soldiers, happy in an occasion of procuring animal food, presently fell to firing wherever the beasts appeared; every loaded gun was discharged upon them, and this continued for very near an hour. A numerous flock of the largest deer, called bohur, met us just in the face, and seemed so desperate, that they had every appearance of running us down; and part of them forced themselves through, regardless of us all, whilst others turned south to escape across the plain.

The king and Ras Michael were in the most violent agitation of mind: though the cause was before their eyes, yet the word went about that Woodage Asahel had attacked the army; and this occasioned a great panic and disorder, for every body was convinced, with reason, that he was not far off. The firing, however, continued, the balls flew about in every direction, some few were killed, and many people and horses were hurt; still they fired, and Ras Michael, at the door of his tent, crying, threatening, and tearing his grey locks, found, for a few minutes, the army was not under his command. At this instant, Kasmati Netcho, whose Fit-Aurari had fallen back on his

front, ordered his kettle-drums to be beat before he arrived in the king's presence; and this being heard, without it being known generally who we were, occasioned another panic; great part of the army believed that Powussen and Gusho were now at hand to keep their appointment with Fasil, and that Netcho and I were his Fit-Auraris. The king ordered his tent to be pitched, his standard to be set up, his drums to beat (the signal for encamping), and the firing immediately ceased. But it was a long while before all the army could believe that Woodage Asahel had not been engaged with some part of it that day. Happily, if near at hand, he did not lay hold of this favourable opportunity; for I am convinced, if just before our arrival, he had attacked Michael on the Samseen side, with 500 horse, our whole army had fled without resistance, and dispersed all over the country.

Here I left Kasmati Netcho, and was making my way towards the king's tent, when I was met by a servant of confidence of Kefla Yasous, who had that day commanded the rear in the retreat; a very experienced officer, brave even to a fault, but full of mildness and humanity, and the most sensible and affable man in the army. He sent to desire that I would come to him alone, or that I would send one of the Greeks that followed me. I promised to do so, after having answered most of the questions that he bade his servant ask of me. After this I searched for Strates and Sebastos, who had been sick upon the road.

I soon came up with them, and was more surprised than I had been for several days, to see them both lie extended on the ground; Strates bleeding at a large wound in his forehead, speaking Greek to himself, and crying out his leg was broken, whilst he pressed it with both his hands below the knee, seemingly regardless of the gash in his head, which appeared to

me a very ugly one, so that I, of course, thought his leg was still worse. Sebastos was lying stretched along the ground, scarcely saying any thing, but sighing loudly. Upon my asking him, whether his arm was broken? he answered feebly, that he was a dying man, and that his legs, his arms, and his ribs, were broken to pieces. I could not, for my life, conceive how this calamity had happened so suddenly; for I had not been half an hour absent, talking to Kefla Yasous's servant; and, what seemed to me still stranger, every body around them were bursting out into fits of laughter.

Ali, Mahomet's servant, who was the only person that I saw concerned, upon my asking, told me that it was all owing to prince George, who had frightened their mules. I have already hinted, that this prince was fond of horsemanship, and rode with saddle, bridle, and stirrups, like an Arab; and, though young, was become an excellent horseman, superior to any in Abyssinia. The manner that two Arabs salute one another, when they meet, is, the person inferior in rank, or age, presents his gun at the other, about 500 yards distance, charged with powder only; he then, keeping his gun always presented, gallops these 500 yards as fast as he can, and, being arrived close, lowers the muzzle of his gun, and pours the explosion just under the other's stirrups, or horse's belly. This they do, sometimes twenty at a time, and you would often think it was impossible somebody should escape being bruised or burnt.

The prince had learned this exercise from me, and was very perfect at the performance of it. We had procured him a short gun, with a lock and flint instead of a match, and he shot not only justly, but gracefully on horseback. He had been out after the deer all the morning; and hearing that I was arrived,

and seeing the two Greeks riding on their mules, he came galloping furiously with his gun presented, and, not seeing me, he fired a shot under the belly of Strates's mule, upon the ground, and wheeling as quick as lightning to the left, regardless of the mischief he had occasioned, was out of sight in a moment, before he knew the consequences.

Never was compliment worse timed or relished. Strates had two panniers upon his mule containing two great earthen jars of hydromel; Sebastos had also some jars and pots, and three or four dozen of drinking glasses; each of the mules was covered with a carpet, and also the panniers; and upon the pack-saddle, between these panniers, did Strates and Sebastos ride. The mules, as well as the loading, belonged to the king, and they only were permitted to ride them because they were sick. Strates went first, and, to save trouble, the halter of Sebastos's mule was tied to Strates's saddle, so the mules were fastened to and followed one another. Upon firing the gun so near it, Strates's mule, not used to compliments of this kind, started, and threw him to the ground; it then trampled upon him, began to run off, and wound the halter around Sebastos behind, who fell to the ground likewise amongst some stones. Both the mules then began kicking at each other, till they had thrown off the panniers and pack-saddles, and broke every thing that was brittle in them. The mischief did not end here; for, in struggling to get loose, they fell foul of the mule of old Azage Tecla Haimanout, one of the king's criminal judges, a very old feeble man, and threw him upon the ground, and broke his foot, so that he could not walk alone for several months afterwards. As soon as I had pitched a tent for the wounded, and likewise dressed Tecla Haimanout's foot, I went to

Kefla Yasous, while the two Mahomets proceeded to the Ras with their money.

The moment I came into the tent, Kefla Yasous rose up and embraced me. He was sitting alone, but with rather a cheerful than a dejected countenance; he told me they were all in great concern, till Ayto Adigo's arrival, at a report which came from Gondar that we had fought with Guebra Mehedin, and had all been slain. I informed him every thing I knew, or had heard; but he had better intelligence than I in every article but this last, fresh news having arrived the night before by way of Delakus. He said, the rebellion of Gusho and Powussen was certain; that the King and Ras knew every circumstance of it; and that Çourt-ohha was the place appointed with Fasil to meet and cut them off. He had not heard of Woodage Asahel's march, but seemed to give full credit to it; he said it was certain, likewise, that Fasil had advanced towards Maitsha; but where his quarters were he did not know, probably they were not at a great distance. He complained violently of his march, and of the number of beasts which they had lost; he wished also that Fasil would be induced to give battle where they were encamped, as his horse would probably be of little use to him among so many torrents and rivers, and must suffer considerably in their advancing hither.

I asked him whither they were now marching? He said, that, as soon as the news of the conspiracy were known, a council was held, where it was the general opinion they should proceed briskly forward, and attack Fasil alone at Bure, then turn to Gondar to meet the other two: but then they had it upon the very best authority, that great rain had fallen to the southward; that the rivers, which were so frequent in that part of the country, were mostly impassable, so there

would be great danger in meeting Fasil with an army spent and fatigued with the difficulty of the roads. It was, therefore, determined, and the Ras was decidedly of that opinion, that they should keep their army entire for a better day, and immediately cross the Nile, and march back to Gondar; that they had accordingly wheeled about, and that day was the first of their proceeding, which had been interrupted by the accident of the firing. Kefla Yasous offered me all sorts of refreshments, and I dined with him; he sent also great abundance for my servants to my tent, lest I should not have yet got my appointments from the king. I then went directly to my own tent, where I found all that belonged to me had arrived safe, under the care of Francisco; and having now procured clothes, instead of those taken from me by Guebra Mehedin, I waited upon the king, and staid a considerable time with him, asking much the same questions Kefla Yasous had done. I would have paid my respects to the Ras also, but missed him, for he was at council.

CHAP. VI.

King's Army retreats towards Gondar—Memorable Passage of the Nile—Dangerous Situation of the Army—Retreat of Kefla Yasous—Battle of Limjour—Unexpected Peace with Fasil—Arrival at Gondar.

It was on the 26th of May 1770, early in the morning, that the army marched towards the Nile. In the afternoon we encamped, between two and three, on the banks of the river Coga, the church Abbo being something more than half a mile to the north-west of us.

Next morning, the 27th, we left the river Coga, marching down upon the Nile; we passed the church of Mariam-Net *, as they call the church of St Anne. Here the superior, attended by about fifty of his monks, came in procession to welcome Ras Michael; but he, it seems, had received some intelligence of ill offices the people of this quarter had done to the Agow's by Fasil's direction; he therefore ordered the church to be plundered, and took the superior, and two of the leading men of the monks, away with him to Gondar; several of the others were killed and wounded, without provocation, by the soldiers, and the rest dispersed through the country.

Prince George had sent immediately in the morn-

* Mary's mother, Ethiop.—E.

ing to put me in mind that I had promised, in the king's tent at Lamgue, under Emfras, to ride with him in his party when in Maitsha. He commanded about 250 chosen horse, and kept at about half a mile's distance on the right flank of the army. I told the king the prince's desire; who only answered, dryly enough, "Not till we pass the Nile; we do not yet know the state of this country." Immediately after this, he detached the horse of Sire and Serawe, and commanded me with his own guards to take possession of the ford where the Fit-Auraris had crossed, and to suffer no mule or horse to pass till their arrival.

There were two fords proposed for our passage; one opposite to the church Boskon Abbo, between the two rivers Kelti and Aroossi (on the west of the Nile), and the Coga and Amlac Ohha from the east; it was said to be deep, but passable, though the bottom was of clay, and very soft; the other ford proposed was higher up, at the second cataract of Kerr. It was thought of consequence to choose this ford; as the Kelti (itself a large and deep river), joined by the Branti, which comes from the westward of Quaquera, brings, in the rainy season, a prodigious accession of water to the Nile; yet, below this, the guides had advised the Ras to pass, and many found it afterwards a sound bottom, very little deeper, with level ground on both sides. We arrived about four on the banks of the Nile, and took possession in a line of about 600 yards of ground.

From the time we decamped from Coga it poured incessantly the most continued rain we ever had yet seen; violent claps of thunder followed close one upon another, almost without interval, accompanied with sheets of lightning, which ran on the ground like water; the day was more than commonly dark, as in an eclipse; and every hollow, or foot-path, collected a

quantity of rain, which fell into the Nile in torrents. It would have brought into the dullest mind Mr Home's striking lines on my native Carron—

> Red ran the river down, and loud and oft
> The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.
> DOUGLAS.

The Abyssinian armies pass the Nile at all seasons. It rolls with it no trees, stones, nor impediments; yet the sight of such a monstrous mass of water terrified me, and made me think the idea of crossing would be laid aside. It was plain, in the face of every one, that they gave themselves over for lost; an universal dejection had taken place, and it was but too visible that the army was defeated by the weather, without having seen an enemy. The Greeks crowded around me, all forlorn and despairing, cursing the hour they had first entered that country, and following these curses with fervent prayers, where fear held the place of devotion. A cold and brisk gale now sprung up at north west, with a clear sun; and soon after four, when the army arrived on the banks of the Nile, these temporary torrents were all subsided, the sun was hot, and the ground again beginning to become dry.

Netcho, Ras Michael's Fit Auraris, with about 400 men, had passed in the morning, and taken his station above us in little huts like bee-hives, which the soldiers, who carry no tents, make very speedily and artificially for themselves, of the long wild oats, each straw of which is at least eight feet long, and near as thick as an ordinary man's little finger. He had sent back word to the king, that his men had passed swimming, and with very great difficulty; that he doubted whether the horses, or loaded mules, could cross at any rate; but, if it was resolved to make the trial,

they should do it immediately, without staying till the increase of the river. He said both banks were composed of black earth, slippery and miry, which would become more so when horses had puddled it; he advised above all, the turning to the right immediately after coming ashore in the direction in which he had fixed poles, as the earth there was hard and firm, besides having the advantage of some round stones which hindered the beasts from slipping or sinking. Instead, therefore, of resting there that night, it was resolved that the horse should cross immediately.

The first who passed, was a young man, a relation of the king, brother to Ayamico, killed at the battle of Banja; he walked in with great caution, marking a tract for the king to pass. He had gone upon rather solid ground, about twice the length of his horse, when he plunged out of his depth, and swam to the other side. The king followed him immediately with a great degree of haste, Ras Michael calling him to proceed with caution, but without success. Afterwards came the old Ras on his mule, with several of his friends swimming both with and without their horses, on each side of him, in a manner truly wonderful. He seemed to have lost his accustomed calmness, and appeared to be a good deal agitated; forbade, upon pain of death, any one to follow him directly, or to swim over, as their custom is, holding their mules by the tail. As soon as these were safely on shore, the king's household and black troops, and I with them, advanced cautiously into the river, and swam happily over, in a deep stream of reddish-coloured water, which ran without violence almost upon a level.

Each horseman had a mule in his hand, which swam after him, or by his side, with his coat of mail and head-piece tied upon it. My horse was a very strong

one, and in good condition, and a servant took charge of my mule and coat of mail, so that, being unembarrassed, I had the happiness to get safe and soon over, and up the path to the right without great difficulty, as had most others of the cavalry who swam along with us; but the ground now began to be broken on both sides of the passage, and it was almost as difficult to get in, as it was to scramble up the bank afterwards.

> Quis cladem, illius noctis, quis funera fando,
> Temperet a lachrymis.————
>
> VIRG.

It is impossible to describe the confusion that followed; night was hard upon us, and, though it increased our loss, it in great measure concealed it; a thousand men had not yet passed, though on mules and horses; many, mired in the muddy landing-place, fell back into the stream, and were carried away and drowned. Of the horse belonging to the king's household, one hundred and eighty in number, seven only were missing; with them Ayto Aylo, vice-chamberlain to the queen, and Tecla Mariam, the king's uncle, a great friend of Ras Michael's, both old men.

The ground on the west side was quite of another consistence than was that upon the east; it was firm, covered with short grass, and rose in small hills like the downs in England, all sloping into little vallies which carried off the water, the declivity being always towards the Nile. There was no baggage (the tent of the Ras and that of the king excepted) which had as yet come over, and these were wet, being drenched in the river. The Fit-Auraris had left, ready made, two rafts for Ozoro Esther, and the other two ladies, with which she might have been easily conducted over, and

without much danger; but the Ras had made Ozoro Esther pass over in the same manner he had crossed himself, many swimming on each side of her mule. She would fain have staid on the east side, but it was in vain to remonstrate. She was with child, and had fainted several times; but yet nothing could prevail with the Ras to trust her on the other bank till morning. She crossed, however, safely, though almost dead with fright. It was said, he had determined to put her to death if she did not pass, from jealousy of her falling into the hands of Fasil; but this I will by no means vouch, nor do I believe it. The night was cold and clear, and a strong wind at north-west had blown all the afternoon. Guebra Mascal, and several of Ras Michael's officers, had purposely tarried for gathering in the stragglers. The river had abated towards mid-night, when, whether from this cause, or, as they alleged, that they found a more favourable ford, all the Tigre infantry, and many mules lightly loaded, passed with less difficulty than any of the rest had done, and with them several loads of flour; luckily also my two tents and mules, to my great consolation, came safely over when it was near morning. Still the army continued to pass, and those that could swim seemed best off. I was in the greatest distress for the good Ammonios, my lieutenant, who was missing, and did not join us till late in the morning, having been all night busy in seeking Ayto Aylo, the queen's chamberlain, and Teela Mariam, who were his great companions, drowned probably at the first attempt to pass, as they were never after heard of.

The greatest part of the foot, however, crossed in the night; and many were of opinion that we had mistaken the passage altogether, by going too high, and being in too great a haste; the banks, indeed,

were so steep, it was very plain that this could never have been an accustomed ford for cavalry. Before day-light, the van and the centre had all joined the king; the number, I believe, that had perished, was never distinctly known; for those that were missing were thought to have remained on the other side with Kefla Yasous, at least for that day. Kefla Yasous, indeed, with the rear and all the baggage of the army, had remained on the other side, and, with very few tents pitched, waited the dawn of the morning.

It happened that the priests of the church of Mariam Net, in the confusion, had been left unheeded, chained arm to arm, in the rear with Kefla Yasous; and they had began interceding with him to procure their pardon and dismission. He was a man, as I said, of the greatest affability and complacency, and heard every one speak with the utmost patience. These priests, terrified to death lest Michael should pull their eyes out, or exercise some of his usual cruelties upon them, which was certainly his intention, by bringing them with him to Gondar, frankly declared to Kefla Yasous what they apprehended. They said that they had never known a ford there before, though they had lived many years in the neighbourhood; nor had ever heard of one at Kerr, the first cataract, which the guides had persuaded the rather of the two: they did believe, therefore, that Michael's guides had deceived him on purpose, and that they intended the same thing by him to-morrow, if he attempted to pass at Kerr. They told him further, that, about three days before Michael had arrived in the neighbourhood of Samseen, they had heard a nagareet beat regularly every evening at sun-set, behind the high woody hill in front, whereon was the church of Boskon Abbo; that they had seen also a man the day before who had left Welleta Yasous, Fasil's principal officer and con-

fident, at Goutto, waiting the arrival of some more troops to pass the Nile there, whence they doubted not that there was treache y intended.

The sagacious and prudent Kella Yasous weighed every word of this in his mind; and, combining all the circumstances together, was immediately convinced that there had been a snare laid by Fasil for them. Entering further into conversation with the priests, and encouraging them with assurances of reward instead of punishment, he inquired if they certainly knew any better ford below? They answered him, they knew of no ford but the common one of Delakus, about eight miles below; that it was true it was not good, and it was deeper than ordinary, as the rainy season had begun early; but that it was so perfectly fordable, that all the country people had gone with asses loaded with butter and honey, and other provisions, for the market of Gondar last week; from whence they inferred that he could easily ford it, and safely, even with loaded mules. They advised him farther, as the night was dry, and the rain fell generally in the day, to lose no time, but to collect his troops, weary as they were, as soon as possible, and send the heavy baggage before; that there was no river or torrent in their way, but Amlac Ohha, which, at that time of night, was at its lowest, and they might then pass it at their leisure, while he covered them with his troops behind; that in such case they might all be safe over the ford by the time the sun became to be hot in the morning, about which hour they did not doubt he would be attacked by Welleta Yasous. They said farther, that, though they could claim little merit, being prisoners, by offering to be his guides, yet he might perhaps find his use in the measure, and would thereby prove their faith and loyalty to the king.

Although all this bore the greatest show of probability, and the lives of the informers were in his hands, that cautious general would not undertake a step of so much consequence, as to separate the rear of the army from the king, without further inquiry. There was then in his camp, waiting the event of next day, two of the guides who had brought them to this ford; a third had gone over the river with Ras Michael. There was likewise in his camp a servant of Nanno Georgis, who had arrived some days before with information to Ras Michael. The two guides pretended to be Agows, consequently friends to the king. He called these into his presence, and ordered them to be put in irons, and then sent for the servant of Nanna Georgis. This man immediately knew the one to be his countryman, but declared the other was a Galla, both of them servants of Fasil, and then living in Maitsha.

Kefla Yasous immediately ordered the Kanitz Kitzera (the executioner of the camp) to attend; and having exhorted them to declare the truth for fear of what would speedily follow, and no satisfactory answer being given, he directed the eyes of the eldest, the Galla, to be plucked out; and he continuing still obstinate, he delivered him to the soldiers, who hewed him to pieces with their large knives, in presence of his companion. In the mean time, the priests had been very earnest with the young one, the Agow, to confess, with better success; but this execution, to which he had been witness, was more prevailing than all their arguments. Upon promise of life, liberty, and reward, he declared that he had left Fasil behind a hill, which he then shewed, about three miles distant, in front of the king's army, and had gone down to Welleta Yasous, who was waiting at Goutto ready to pass the Nile: that they were sent forward to decoy the king to that passage, under the name of a ford,

where they expected great part of the army would perish if they attempted to pass: * that Fasil was to attack such part of the king's army as should have passed as soon as it appeared upon the heights above the river, but not till, by the firing on the east side, he knew that Welleta Yasous was engaged with the rear, or part of the army which should still remain on that side separated by the river: that they did not imagine Ras Michael could have passed that night, but that to-morrow he would certainly be attacked by Fasil, as his companion, who had crossed with Ras Michael, was to go directly to Fasil, and inform him of the situation of the king, the Ras, and the army.

Kefla Yasous sent two of his principal officers, with a distinct detail of this whole affair, to the king It being now dark, they swam the river on horseback, with much more difficulty and danger than we had done, and they found Ras Michael and the king in council, to whom they told their message with every circumstance, adding, that Kefla Yasous, as the only way to preserve the army, quite spent with fatigue, and encumbered with such a quantity of baggage, had struck his tent, and would, by that time, be on his march for the ford of Delakus, which he should cross, and, after leaving a party to guard the baggage and sick, he should with the freshest of his men join the army. The spy that had passed with Michael and the king was now sought for; but he had lost no time, and was gone off to Fasil at Boscon Abbo. Kefla Yasous having seen all the baggage on their way before him, did, as his last act, perhaps not strictly consistent with justice, hang the poor unfortu-

* It gives us but a poor impression of the recommending abilities of Michael to find that he did not know the fords in the Abay, or had not guides that he could depend on with safety.—E.

nate informer, the Agow; upon one of the trees at the ford, that Welleta Yasous, when he passed in the morning, might see how certainly his secret was discovered, and that consequently he was on his guard.

On the 28th he crossed Amlac Ohha with some degree of difficulty, and was obliged to abandon several baggage-mules. He advanced after this with as great diligence as possible to Delakus, and found the ford, though deep, much better than he expected. He had pitched his tent on the high road to Gondar, before Welleta Yasous knew he was decamped, and of this passage he immediately advised Michael, refreshing his troops for any emergency.

About two in the afternoon, Welleta Yasous appeared with his horse on the other side of the Nile, but it was then too late. Kefla Yasous was so strongly posted, and the banks of the river so guarded with fire-arms, down to the water-edge, that Fasil and all his army would not have dared to attempt the passage, or even approach the banks of the river.

As soon as Ras Michael received the intelligence, he dispatched the Fit-Auraris, Netcho, to take post upon the ford of the Kelti, a large river, but rather broad than deep, about three miles off. He himself followed early in the morning, and passed the Kelti just at sun rise, without halting; he then advanced to meet Kefla Yasous; as the army began to want provisions, the little flour that had been brought over, or, which the soldiers had taken with them, being nearly exhausted during that night and the morning after. It was found, too, that the men had but little powder, none of them having recruited their quantity since the hunting of the deer; but what they had was in perfect good order, being kept in horns and small wooden bottles, corked in such a manner as to be secured from water of any kind. Kefla Yasous, therefore, being in possession of the baggage, the powder, and the provi-

sions, a junction with him was absolutely necessary, and they expected to effect this at Wainadega, about twenty miles from their last night's quarters. The ground was all firm and level beteen Kelti and the Avoley, a space of about fifteen miles.

Ras Michael halted after passing the Kelti, and sent on the Fit-Aurarís about five miles before him; he then ordered what quantity of flour, or provisions of any kind could be found, to be distributed among the men, and directed them to refresh themselves for an hour before they again began their march, because they might expect soon to engage with Fasil. The day being clear, and the sun hot, those that the cold affected, from the passage of last night, began to recover their former health and agility; their clothes were now all dry, clean washed, and comfortable; and had it not been for the fatigue that remained from the two last days, and the short allowance to which they were reduced, perhaps there were few occasions wherein the army was fitter for an engagement. Being now disembarrassed from dangerous rivers, they were on dry solid ground, which they had often marched over before in triumph, and where all the villages around them, lying in ruins, put them in mind of many victorious campaigns, and especially the recent one at Fagitta over this same Fasil. Add to all this, they were on their way home to Gondar; and that alone made them march with a tenfold alacrity. Gondar, they thought, was to be the end of all their cares; a place of relaxation and ease for the rest of the rainy season.

It was between twelve and one we heard the Fit-Aurarís engaged, and there was sharp firing on both sides, which soon ceased. Michael ordered his army immediately to halt; he and the king, and Billetana Gu ta Tecla, commanded the van; Welleta Michael, and Ayto Teslos of Sire, the rear. Having marched a little farther, he changed his order of battle; he

drew up the body of troops which he commanded, together with the king, on a flat, large hill, with two vallies running parallel to the sides of it like trenches. Beyond these trenches were two higher ridges of hills that ran along the side of them, about half a musket-shot from him; the vallies were soft ground, which yet could bear horses, and these hills, on his right and on his left, advanced about 100 yards on each side farther than the line of his front. The gross of these side-divisions occupied the height; but a line of soldiers from them came down to the edge of the vallies like wings. In the plain ground, about three hundred yards directly in his front, he had placed all the cavalry, except the king's body guards drawn up before him, commanded by an old officer of Mariam Barea. As prince George was in the cavalry, he strongly solicited the Ras at least to let him remain with them, and see them engage; but the Ras, considering his extreme youth and natural rashness, called him back, and placed him beside me before the king. It was not long before the Fit-Auraris's two messengers arrived, running like deer along the plain, which was not absolutely flat, but sloped gently down towards us, declining, as I should guess, not a fathom in fifteen.

Their account was, that they had fallen in with Fasil's Fit-Auraris; that they had attacked him smartly, and, though the enemy were greatly superior, being all horse, except a few musqueteers, had killed four of them. The Ras, having first heard the message of the Fit-Auraris alone, he sent a man to report it to the king; and, immediately after this, he ordered two horsemen to go full gallop along the east side of the hill, the low road to Wainadega, to warn Kefla Yasous of Fasil's being near at hand; he likewise directed the Fit-Auraris to advance cautiously till he had seen Fasil, and to pursue no party that should retreat before him.

The king, the Ras, and the whole army, began to be in pain for Kefla Yasous; and we should have changed our ground, and marched forward immediately, had we not heard the alarm-guns fired by Fit-Auraris Netcho, and presently he and his party came in, the men running, and the horses at full gallop. Ras Michael had given his orders, and returned to the presence of the king on his mule; he could not venture among horse, being wounded in the middle of the thigh, and lame in that leg, but always charged on a mule among the musketry. He said shortly to the king, "No fear, Sir, stand firm; Fasil is lost if he fights to-day on this ground."

Fasil appeared at the top of the hill. I have no guess about the number of such large bodies of troops, but, by those more used to such computations, it was said he had about 3000 horse. It was a fine sight, but the evening was beginning to be overcast. After having taken a full view of the army, they all began to move slowly down the hill, beating their kettle-drums. There were two trees a little before the cavalry, that were advanced beyond our front. Fasil sent down a party to skirmish with these, and he himself halted after having made a few paces down the hill. The two bodies of horse met just half way at the two trees, and mingled together, as appeared at least, with very decisive intention; but, whether it was by orders, or from fear (for they were not overmatched in numbers), our horse turned their backs, and came precipitately down, so that we were afraid they would break in upon the foot. Several shots were fired from the centre at them by order of the Ras, who cried out aloud in derision, "Take away these horses and send them to the mill!" They divided, however, to the right and left, into the two grassy vallies under cover of the musketry, and a very

few horse of Fasil's were carried in along with them, and slain by the soldiers on the side of the hill. On the king's side no man of note was missing but Welleta Michael, nephew of Ras Michael, whose horse falling, he was taken prisoner, and carried off by Fasil.

A few minutes after this, arrived a messenger from Fasil, a dwarf, named Doho, a man always employed on errands of this kind; it is an intercourse which is permitted, and the messenger not only protected, but rewarded, as I have before observed; it is a singular custom, and none but shrewd fellows are sent, very capable of making observations, and Doho was one of these. He told the Ras to prepare immediately, for Fasil intended to attack him as soon as he had brought his foot up: Doho further added a request from his master, as a mark of his duty, that the king might not change his dress that day, lest he might fall into the hands of some of the stranger troops of Galla, who might not know him otherwise, or shew the proper respect to his person. The Ras, I was told afterwards, for he was too far before us to hear him, laughed violently at this compliment. "Tell Fasil," says he, "to wait for but a few minutes, where he now is, and I promise him that the king shall dress in any way he pleases." When Doho's message was told to the king, he sent back answer to Ras Michael, "Let Doho tell Fasil from me, that if I had known these two trees had been where they are, I would have brought Welleta Gabriel, Ozoro Esther's steward, to him;" by which he very archly alluded to the battle of Fagitta, where that drunkard, shooting from behind a tree, and killing one Galla, made all the rest fly for fear of the zibib.

Doho, being thus dismissed, the whole army ad-

vanced immediately at a very brisk pace, hooping and screaming, as it is their custom, in a most harsh and barbarous manner, crying out, "Hatze Ali! Michael Ali!" But Fasil, who saw the forward countenance of the king's troops, and that a few minutes would lay him under necessity of risking a battle, which he did not intend, withdrew his troops at a smart trot over the smooth downs, returning towards Boskon Abbo. It seems, as we heard afterwards, he was in as great anxiety about the fate of Welleta Yasous, of whom we had no intelligence, as we had been for that of Kefla Yasous; and he had got as yet no information till he had taken Welleta Michael prisoner; he had heard no firing, nor did he consequently know whether Kefla Yasous had passed the Nile, with the Ras, or not; he had, therefore, left his camp, and marched with his horse only to take a view of Michael, but had no sort of intention to give him battle; and he was now very much exasperated against both Gusho and Powussen, by whom he saw plainly that he had been betrayed.

This is what was called the battle of Limjour, from a village burnt by Ras Michael last campaign, which stood where the two trees are; the name of a battle is surely more than it deserves. Had Fasil been half as willing as the Ras, it could not have failed being a decisive one. The Ras, who saw that Fasil would not fight, easily penetrated his reasons, and no sooner was he gone, and his own drums silent, than he heard a nagareet beat, and knew it to be that of Kefla Yasous. This general encamped upon the river Avoley, leaving his tents and baggage under a proper guard, and had marched with the best and freshest of his troops to join Michael before the engagement. All was joy at meeting, every rank of men joined in extolling the merit and conduct of their leaders; and, indeed, it

may be fairly said, the situation of the king and the army was desperate at that instant, when the troops were separated on different sides of the Nile; nor could they have been saved but by the speedy resolution taken by Kefla Yasous to march without loss of time, and pass at the ford of Delakus, and the diligence and activity with which he executed that resolution

Although a good part of Kefla Yasous's soldiers were left at the Avoley, the Ras, as a mark of confidence, gave him the command of the rear. We were retreating before an enemy, and it was, therefore, the post of honour, where the Ras would have been himself, had not Kefla Yasous joined us. We soon marched the five miles, or thereabout, that remained to the Avoley, and arrived just as the sun was setting; and there heard from the spies that Welleta Yasous with his troops had retired again to Gouto, after having been joined by Woodage Asahel. There again were fresh rejoicings, as every one recovered their baggage and provisions, many rejoined their friends they had given over as lost at the passage, and the whole army prepared their supper. All but Ras Michael seemed to have their thoughts bent upon sleep and rest; whilst he, the most infirm and aged of the army, no sooner was under cover of his tent than he ordered the drum to beat for assembling a council.—What passed there I did not know; I believe nothing but a repetition of the circumstances that induced Kefla Yasous to advance to Delakus; for, after supper, just before the king went to bed in the evening, a man from Kefla Yasous brought the four priests of Mariam Net, who had been the guides to the ford at Delakus. The king ordered meat to be set before them; but they had done very well already with Kefla Yasous, and, therefore, they only took a small piece

of bread and a cup of bouza, the eating and drinking in presence of the king being an assurance that their life was safe and pardon real. They had then five ounces of gold, and several changes of clothes given to each of them, and the king took them to Gondar with him, to provide for them there, out of the reach of the revenge of Fasil, and placed them in the church of Hamar Noh *.

The army marched next day to Dingleber, a high hill, or rock, approaching so close to the lake as scarcely to leave a passage between. Upon the top of this rock is the king's house. As we arrived very early there, and were now out of Fasil's government, the king insisted upon treating Ras Michael and all the people of consideration. A great quantity of cattle had been sent thither from Dembea by those who had estates in the neighbourhood, out of which he gave ten oxen to Ras Michael, ten to Kefla Yasous, the same number to several others, and one to myself, with two ounces of gold for Strates and Sebastos to buy mules; but they had already provided themselves; for besides the two they rode upon of mine, they and my servants had picked up four others in very good condition, whose masters had probably perished in the river, for they were never claimed afterwards.

Just as the king sat down to dinner, an accident happened that occasioned great trepidation among all his servants. A black eagle † was chased into the king's tent by some of the birds of prey that hover about the camp; and it was afterwards in the mouth of every one,

* This is a large church belonging to the palace, called by the most ordinary name, Noah's Ark.

† See a figure of the Lind in the Appendix.

the king would be dethroned by a man of inferior birth and condition. Every body at that time looked to Fasil: the event proved the application false, though the omen was true. Powussen of Begemder was as low-born as Fasil, as great a traitor, but more successful, to whom the ominous presage pointed; and, though we cannot but look upon the whole as accident, it was but too soon fulfilled.

In the evening of the 29th, arrived at Dingleber two horsemen from Fasil, clad in habits of peace, and without arms; they were known to be two of his principal servants, were grave, genteel, middle-aged men; this message had nothing of Doho's buffoonery. They had an audience early after their coming, first of the Ras, then of the King. They said, and said truly, that Fasil had repassed the Kelti, was encamped on the opposite side, and was not yet joined by Welleta Yasous. Their errand was, to desire that the Ras might not fatigue his men, by unnecessarily hurrying on to Gondar, because he might rest secured of receiving no further molestation from Fasil their master, as he was on his march to Bure. They told the Ras the whole of the conspiracy, as far as it regarded him, and the agreement that Powussen and Gusho had made with their master to surround him at Derdera: they mentioned moreover, how sensible Fasil was of their treason towards him; that, instead of keeping their word, they had left him to engage the King and the Ras's whole force at a time when they knew the greatest part of his Galla troops were retired to the other side of the Nile, and could be assembled with difficulty: That if the Ras, by chance, had crossed at Delakus, as Kefla Yasous had done, instead of embarrassing his army among the rivers of Maitsha, and crossing the Nile at that most dangerous place near Amlac-Ohha (a passage never before

attempted in the rainy season), the consequence would have been, that he must have either fought at great disadvantage with an inferior army against the Ras, or have retired to Metchakel, leaving his whole country to the mercy of his enemies. Fasil declared his resolution never again to appear in arms against the king, but that he would hold his government under him, and pay the accustomed taxes punctually: he promised also, that he would renounce all manner of connection with Gusho and Powussen, as he had already done, and he would take the field against them next season with his whole force, whenever the king ordered him. The messengers concluded, with desiring the Ras to give Fasil his grand-daughter, Welleta Selasse, in marriage, and that he would then come to Gondar without distrust.

At the audience they had of the king the same night, they added, "That Fasil could not trust Ras Michael, he broke his word so often, and had so many reservations and evasions in his promises."

The Ras, though he did not believe all this, made no difficulty in agreeing to every thing that they desired. He promised the grand-daughter; and, as an earnest of his believing the rest, the king's two nagareets were brought to the door of the tent, where, to our very great surprise, we heard it proclaimed, "Fasil is governor of the 'Agow, Maitsha, Gojam, and Damot; prosperity to him, and long may he live a faithful servant to the king our master!"—This was an extraordinary revolution in so small a space of time. It was scarce 43 hours since Fasil had laid a scheme for drowning the greater part of the army in the Nile, and cutting the throats of the residue on both sides of it; it was not twenty-four hours since he had met us to fight in open field, and now he was become the king's lieutenant-general in four of the

most opulent provinces of Abyssinia. This was produced, however, by the necessity of the times; and both parties were playing at the same game, who should over-reach the other. Fasil's messengers were magnificently cloathed, and it was first intended they should have gone back to him, but, after reflection, another person was sent, these two choosing to go to Gondar with the king to remain hostages for Fasil's word, and to bring back his investiture from thence to Bure. The whole camp abandoned itself to joy.

Late in the evening Ozoro Esther came to the king's tent. She had been ill, and alarmed, as she well might, at the passage of the Nile, which had given her a more delicate look than ordinary; she was dressed all in white, and I thought I seldom had seen so handsome a woman. The king, as I have mentioned, had sent ten oxen to Ras Michael, but he had given twenty to Ozoro Esther; and it was to thank him for this extraordinary mark of favour that she had come to visit him in his tent. I had for sometime past, indeed, thought they were not insensible to the merit of each other. Upon her thanking the king for the distinction he had shewn her, "Madam," said he "your husband Ras Michael is intent upon employing, in the best way possible for my service, those of the army that are strong and vigorous; you, I am told, bestow your care on the sick and disabled, and by your attention, they are restored to their former health and activity; the strong active soldier eats the cows that I have sent to the Ras; the enfeebled and sick recover upon yours, for which reason I sent you a double portion, that you may have it in your power to do double good." After this the room was cleared, and she had an audience alone for half an hour. I doubt very much whether Ras Michael had any share

in the conversation; the king was in the very gayest humour, and went to rest about twelve. The Ras loved Ozoro Esther, but was not jealous.

I had violent threatenings of the ague; and had gone to bed full of reflections on extraordinary events, that, in a few hours, had as it were crowded upon one another. I had appointed Fasil's servants to come to my tent in the evening. I understood a council had been called, to which Welleta Kyrillos, the king's historiographer, had been sent for, and instructed how to give an account of this campaign of Maitsha, the passage of the Nile, and the meeting with Fasil at Limjour. Kefla Yasous's march to Delakus, and passage there, were ordered to be written in gold letters, and so was Fasil's appointment to Damot and Maitsha. From this authentic copy, and what I myself heard or observed, I formed these notes of the campaign.

On the 30th of May, nothing material happened, and, in a few days we arrived at Gondar. The day before we entered, being encamped on the river Kemona, came two messengers from Gusho and Powussen, with various excuses why they had not joined. They were very ill received by the Ras, and refused an audience of the king. Their present, which is always new clothes to some value, was a small piece of dark-blue Surat cloth, value about half-a-crown, intended as an affront; they were not suffered to sleep in the camp, but forwarded to Fasil, where they were going.

The 3d of June the army encamped on the river Kahha, under Gondar. From the time we left Dingleber, some one or other of the Ras's confidential friends had arrived every day. Several of the great officers of state reached us at the Kemona, many others met us at Abba Samuel. I did not perceive the news

they brought increased the spirits either of the King or the Ras; the soldiers however, were all contented, because they were at home; but the officers, who saw farther, wore very different countenances, especially those that were of Amhara.

I, in particular, had very little reason to be pleased; for, after having undergone a constant series of fatigues, dangers, and expences, I was returned to Gondar disappointed of my views in arriving at the source of the Nile, without any other acquisition than a violent ague. The place where that river rises remained still as great a secret as it had been ever since the catastrophe of Phaeton :—

> Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,
> Occuluitque caput, quod adhuc latet.——
>
> OVID. METAM. lib. ii.

CHAP. VII.

King and Army retreat to Tigre—Interesting Events following that Retreat—The Body of Ioas is found—Favourable Turn of the King's Affairs—Socinios, a new King, proclaimed at Gondar.

The king had heard that Gusho and Powussen, with Gojam under Ayto Aylo, and all the troops of Belessen and Lasta, were ready to fall upon him in Gondar as soon as the rains should have swelled the Tacazze, so that the army could not retire into Tigre; and it was now thought to be the instant this might happen, as the king's proclamation in favour of Fasil, especially in giving him Gojam, it was not doubted, would hasten the motion of the rebels. Accordingly that very morning, after the king arrived, the proclamation was made at Gondar, giving Fasil Gojam, Damot, the Agow, and Maitsha; after which his two servants were again magnificently clothed, and sent back with honour.

As I had never despaired, some way or other, of arriving at the fountains of the Nile, from which we were not fifty miles distant when we turned back at Karcagna, so I never neglected to improve every means that held out to me the least probability of accomplishing this end. I had been very attentive and

serviceable to Fasil's servants, while in the camp. I spoke greatly of their master; and, when they went away, gave each of them a small present for himself, and a trifle also for Fasil. They had, on the other hand, been very importunate with me, as a physician, to prescribe something for a cancer on the lip, as I understood it to be, with which Welleta Yasous, Fasil's principal general, was afflicted.

I had been advised, by some of my medical friends, to carry along with me a preparation of hemlock, or cicuta, recommended by Dr Stork, a physician at Vienna. A considerable quantity had been sent me from France by commission, with directions how to use it. To keep on the safe side, I prescribed small doses to Welleta Yasous; being much more anxious to preserve myself from reproach, than warmly solicitous about the cure of my unknown patient. I gave him positive advice to avoid eating raw meat; to keep to a milk diet, and drink plentifully of whey when he used this medicine. They were overjoyed at having succeeded so well in their commission, and declared before the king, "That Fasil, their master, would be more pleased with receiving a medicine that would restore Welleta Yasous to health, than with the magnificent appointments the king's goodness had bestowed upon him." "If it is so," said I, "in this day of grace, I will ask two favours." "And that's a rarity," says the king; "come, out with them; I don't believe any body is desirous you should be refused; I certainly am not; only I bar one of them,—you are not to relapse into your usual despondency, and talk of going home." "Well," Sir, said I, "I obey, and that is not one of them. They are these—You shall give me, and oblige Fasil to ratify it, the village Geesh, and the source where the Nile rises, that I may be from thence furnished with money for myself and ser-

vants; it shall stand me instead of Tangouri, near Emfras, and, in value, it is not worth so much. The second is, that, when I shall see that it is in his power to carry me to Geesh, and shew me those sources, Fasil shall do it upon my request, without fee or reward, and without excuse or evasion."

They all laughed at the easiness of the request; all declared that this was nothing, and wished to do ten times as much. The king said, "Tell Fasil I do give the village of Geesh, and those fountains he is so fond of, to Yagoube and his posterity for ever, never to appear under another name in the deftar, and never to be taken from him, or exchanged, either in peace or war. Do you swear this to him in the name of your master." Upon which they took the two fore-fingers of my right hand, and, one after the other, laid the two fore-fingers of their right hand across them, then kissed them; a form of swearing used there, at least among those that call themselves Christians. And as Azage Kyrillos, the king's secretary and historian, was then present, the king ordered him to enter the gift in the deftar, or revenue-book, where the taxes and revenue of the king's lands are registered. "I will write it," says the old man, "in letters of gold; and, poor as I am, will give him a village four times better than either Geesh or Tangouri, if he will take a wife and stay amongst us, at least till my eyes are closed." It will be easily guessed this rendered the conversation a cheerful one. Fasil's servants retired, to set out the next day, gratified to their utmost wish, and, as soon as the king was in bed, I went to my apartment likewise.

But very different thoughts were then occupying Michael and his officers. They could not trust Fasil, and, besides, he could do them no service; the rain was set in, and he was gone home; the western part of the kingdom was ready to rise upon him; Wog-

gora, to the north, immediately in his way, was all in arms, and impatient to revenge the severities they had suffered when Michael first marched to Gondar. The Tacazze, which separates Tigre from Woggora, and runs at the foot of the high mountains of Samen, was one of the largest and most rapid rivers in Abyssinia; and, though not the first to overflow, was, when swelled to its height, impassable by horse or foot, rolling down prodigious stones and trees with its current. Dangerous as the passage was, however, there was no safety but in attempting it: Michael, therefore, and every soldier with him, were of opinion, that, if they must perish, they should rather meet death in the river, on the confines of their own country, than fall alive into the hands of their enemies in Amhara. For this, preparation had been making night and day, since Ras Michael entered Gondar, and probably before it.

There was in Belessen, on the nearest and easiest way to a ford of the Tacazze, a man of quality called Adero, and his son Zor Woldo. To these two Ras Michael used to trust the care of the police of Gondar, when he was absent upon any expedition; they were very active and capable, but had fallen from their allegiance, and joined Powussen and Gusho, at least in councils. The Ras, immediately upon arriving at Gondar, dissembling what he knew of their treason, had sent to them to prepare a quantity of flour for the troops that were to pass their way; to get together what horses they could as quietly as possible; to send him word what state the ford was in; and also, if Powussen had made any movement forward, or if Ayto Tesfos, governor of Samen, had shewn any disposition to dispute the passage through Woggora into Tigre. Word was immediately returned by the traitor Adero, that the ford was as yet very passable; that it was said Powussen was marching towards

Maitsha; that Ayto Tesfos was at home upon his high rock, the seat of his government, and that no time was to be lost, as he believed he had already flour enough to suffice; he added also, that it would be dangerous to collect more, for it would give the alarm. This was all received as truth, and a messenger sent back with orders, that Zor Wolde should leave the flour in small bags at Ebenaat, and that he should himself and his father wait the Ras at the ford, with what horse they had, the fourth day from that, in the evening.

The next morning the whole army was in motion. I had the evening before taken leave of the king, in an interview which cost me more than almost any one in my life. The substance was, "That I was ill in my health, and quite unprepared to attend him into Tigre; that my heart was set upon completing the only purpose like my coming into Abyssinia, without which I should return into my own country with disgrace; that I hoped, through his majesty's influence, Fasil might find some way for me to accomplish it; if not, I trusted soon to see him return, when I hoped it would be easy; but if I then went to Tigre, I was fully persuaded I should never have the resolution to come again to Gondar."

He seemed to take heart at the confidence with which I spoke of his return. "You, Yagoube," says he, in a humble, complaining tone, "could tell me, if you pleased, whether I shall or not, and what is to befal me; those instruments and those wheels, with which you are constantly looking at the stars, cannot be for any use, unless for prying into futurity."—"Indeed," said I, "Sir *, these are things by which we guide ships at sea, and by these we mark down

* Egziai, the address of the Negus.—E.

the ways that we travel by land; teach them to people that never passed them before, and, being once traced, keep them thus to be known by all men for ever. But of the decrees of Providence, whether they regard you or myself, I know no more than the mule upon which you ride."—"Tell me, then, I pray, tell me, what is the reason you speak of my return as certain?"—"I speak," said I, "from observation, from reflections that I have made, much more certain than prophecies and divinations by stars. The first campaign of your reign at Fagita, when you was relying upon the dispositions that the Ras had most ably and skilfully made, a drunkard, with a single shot, defeated a numerous army of your enemies. Powussen and Gusho were your friends, as you thought, when you marched out last, yet they had, at that very instant, made a league to destroy you at Derder[illegible] and nothing but a miracle could have saved you, [illegible] between two lakes and three armies. It was [illegible] you nor Michael that disordered their councils, and made them fail in what they had concerted. You was for burning Samseen, whilst Woodage Asahel was there in ambush with a large force, with a knowledge of all the fords, and master of all the inhabitants of the country. Remember how you passed those rivers, holding hand in hand, and drawing one another over. Could you have done this with an enemy behind you, and such an enemy as Woodage Asahel? He would have followed and harassed you till you took the ford at Goutto, and there was Welleta Yasous waiting to oppose you with 6000 men on the opposite bank. When Ras Michael marched by Mariam Net, he found the priests at their homes. Was that the case in any of the other churches we passed? No; all were fled for fear of Michael; yet these were more guilty than any, by their connections with Basil; notwithstanding which, they alone, of all others, staid, though they

knew not why; an invisible hand held them, that they might operate your preservation. Nothing could have saved the army but the desperate passage, so tremendous that it will exceed the belief of man, crossing the Nile that night. Yet if the priests had crossed before this, not a man would have proceeded to the ford. The priests would have been Ras Michael's prisoners, and, on the other side, they never would have spoken a word whilst in the presence of Michael. Providence, therefore, kept them with Kefla Yasous; all was discovered, and the army saved by the retreat, and his speedy passing at the ford of Delakus.

"What would have happened to Kefla Yasous, had Fasil marched down to Delakus, either before or after the passage? Kefla Yasous would have been cut off before Ras Michael had passed the Kelti; instead of which, an unknown cause detained him, most infatuated-like, beating his kettle-drums behind Boskon Abbo; *while our* army under the Ras was swimming *that dangerous river*, and most of us passing the night naked, without tents, provision, or powder. Nor did he ever think of presenting himself till we had warmed ourselves by an easy march in a fine day, when we were every way his superiors, and Kefla Yasous in his rear. From all these special marks of the favour of an over-ruling Providence, I do believe stedfastly that God will not leave his work half finished. He it is who, governing the whole universe, has yet reserved specially to himself the department of war; he it is who has stiled himself the God of Battles." The king was very much moved, and, as I conceived, persuaded. He said, "O Yagoube, go but with me to Tigre, and I will do for you whatever you desire me!" —"You do, Sir," said I, "whatever I desire you, and more. I have told you my reasons why that cannot be; let me stay here a few months, and wait your

return." The king then advised me to live entirely at Koscam with the Iteghe, without going out, unless Fasil came to Gondar, and to send him punctually word how I was treated. Upon this we parted with inexpressible reluctance. He was a king worthy to reign over a better people; my heart was deeply penetrated with those marks of favour and condescension which I had uniformly received from him ever since I entered his palace.

On the 5th of June, while Powussen, Adero, and the conspirators, were waiting his passage through Belessen (that is, to the S. W.), the king's army marched towards Koscam, over the mountain Debra Tzai, towards Walkayt, and the low hot provinces of Abyssinia, which lie to the N. E.; so that the distance between them increased every day in the greatest proportion possible.

The queen ordered her gates at Koscam to be shut. A little before the Ras mounted his mule, Ozoro Esther and her servants took refuge with her mother the Iteghe; Gondar was like a town which had been taken by an enemy; every one that had arms in his hands did just what he pleased.

Two very remarkable things were said to have happened the night before Michael left the city. He had always pretended, that, before he undertook an expedition, a person, or spirit, appeared to him, who told him the issue and consequence of the measures he was then taking; this he imagined to be St Michael the archangel; and he presumed very much upon this intercourse. In a council that night, where none but friends were present, he had told them that his spirit had appeared some nights before, and ordered him, in his retreat, to surprise the mountain of Wechne, and either slay or carry with him to Tigre the princes sequestered there. Nebrit Tecla, governor of

Axum, with his two sons (all concerned in the late king's murder), were, it is said, strong advisers of this measure; but Ras Michael (probably satiated with royal blood already), Kefla Yasous, and all the more worthy men of any consequence, acting on principle, absolutely refused to consent to it. It was upon this the passage by Belessen was substituted instead of the attempt on Wechne, and it was determined to conceal it.

The next advice which the Ras said this devil, or angel, gave him, was, that they should set fire to the town of Gondar, and burn it to the ground, otherwise his good fortune was to leave him there for ever; and for this there was a great number of advocates, Michael seeming to lean that way himself. But, when it was reported to the king, that young prince put a direct negative upon it, by declaring that he would rather stay in Gondar, and fall by the hands of his enemies, than either conquer them, or escape from them, by the commission of so enormous a crime. When this was publicly known, it procured the king universal good-will, as was experienced afterwards, when he and Michael were finally defeated, and taken prisoners, upon their march in return to Gondar.

The army advanced rapidly towards Walkayt. Being near the Tacazze, they turned short upon Mai-Lumi (the river of Limes); the governor of which, as I have already said, in our journey from Masuah, detained us several days at Addergey with a view to rob us, upon a report prevailing that Ras Michael was defeated at Fagitta. This thief the king surprised and made prisoner, set fire to his house after having plundered it, and carried him as a hostage to Tigre, for the payment of a sum which he had laid upon every village, to save them from being set on fire.

Being now safely arrived on the banks of the Tacazze, the first province beyond which is that of Sire, Michael sent before him Ayto Tesfos, the governor, a man exceedingly beloved, to assemble all sort of assistance for passing the river. Every one flocked to the stream with the utmost alacrity; the water was deep, and the baggage wet in crossing, but the bottom was good and hard; they passed both expeditiously and safely, and were received in Sire, and then in Tigre, with every demonstration of joy.

Michael, now arrived in his government, set himself seriously to unite every part under his own jurisdiction. It was now the rainy season; there was no possibility of taking the field, and a rebellion prevailed in two different districts of his province. The sons of Kasmati Woldo, whose father Ras Michael put to death, had declared for themselves, in their paternal government of Enderta; and Netcho, who married Ras Michael's daughter, had taken possession of the mountain Aromata, commonly called Haramat, an ancient strong-hold of his father's, of which Michael had made himself master, while yet a young man, after besieging it fifteen years. Netcho had also united himself with Za Menfus Kedus, a man of great property in that and the neighbouring country. Enderta is a flat fertile territory, in the very south-east of Abyssinia, depending on Tigre, and the mountain Aromata is situated near the middle of that province; before taking the field, Michael had directed the two Woldos to be assassinated during a feast at Enderta, and their party dispersed of itself without further effort.

The mountain shewed a better countenance, and seemed to promise employment for a long time; it was garrisoned by old and veteran troops, who had served under Ras Michael. Netcho was the son of

his hereditary enemy, anciently governor of that mountain, whom he had reconciled by giving him his daughter in marriage; notwithstanding which he had now rebelled, just as the Ras marched to Maitsha against Fasil, by the persuasion of Gusho and Powussen, purposely that he might form a diversion in Tigre, and for this reason he had little hopes of mercy, if ever he fell into the hands of Ras Michael. I had seen him often, and knew him; he was a tall, thin, dull man, of a soft temper, and easily imposed upon. Za Menfus, the other chief in the mountain, was a very active, resolute, enterprising man, of whom Michael was afraid. He had a large property all around the mountain; had been put in irons by Michael, and had escaped; besides, on his return to Tigre, he had slain the father of Guebra Mascal, Michael's nephew by marriage, who was commander in chief of all the musketry Michael had brought from Tigre; so that he feared nothing so much as falling into Ras Michael's hands.

Ras Michael saw the danger of leaving an enemy so prepared and so situated behind him; he therefore, before the rainy season was yet finished, ordered the whole mountain to be surrounded with barracks, or huts, for his soldiers; he also erected three houses for himself, the principal officers, and the king. The country people were called in to plough and sow the ground in the neighbourhood; so that his intention was plainly never to rise from thence till he had reduced the mountain of Aromata for the second time, after having once before succeeded in taking it, after fifteen years siege, from Netcho's father. There we shall leave him at this siege, and return to Gondar.

It was on the 10th of June that Gusho and Powussen entered Gondar, and next day, the 11th, waited

upon the queen; they both beseeched her to return from Koscam to the capital, and take into her hands the reins of government for the interim: this she positively refused, unless peace was first made with Fasil. She said, that Fasil was the only person who had endeavoured to avenge his master Joas's death; that he had continued till that day in arms in that quarrel; and, notwithstanding all the offers that could be made her, she never would come to Gondar, nor take any part in public business, without this condition. Fasil, moreover, informed her by a messenger, that there was no trust to be put either in Gusho or Powussen; that they had failed in their engagement of following and fighting Ras Michael in Maitsha, and had purposely staid at home till a superior army should fall upon him singly, and ravage his country; that they had broken their word a second time by entering into Gondar without him; whereas the agreement was, that they all three should have done this at once, to settle the form of government by their joint deliberation. Many days passed in these negociations; Fasil always promising to come upon some condition or other, but never keeping his word, or stirring from Bure.

On the 20th, the queen's servants, who had gone to offer terms of reconciliation to Fasil on the part of Gusho and Powussen, returned to their homes. The same day he ordered it to be proclaimed in the market-place, "That Ayto Tesfos should be governor of Samen, and that whoever should rob on that road, or commit any violence, should suffer death." This was an act of power purposely intended to affront Powussen and Gusho, and seemed to be opening a road for a correspondence with Ras Michael; but, above all, it shewed contempt for their party and their cause, and that he considered his own as very distinct from theirs:

for Tesfos had taken arms in the late king's lifetime, at the same time, and upon the same principles and provocation, as Fasil, and had never laid down his arms, or made peace with Ras Michael, but kept his government in defiance of him.

On the 24th, for fear of giving umbrage, I waited upon Gusho and Powussen at Gondar. I saw them in the same room where Ras Michael used to sit. They were both lying on the floor playing at draughts, with the figure of a draught-table drawn with chalk upon the carpet; they offered no other civility or salutation, but, shaking me each by the hand, they played on, without lifting their heads, or looking me in the face.

Gusho began by asking me, "Would it not have better if you had gone with me to Amhara, as I desired you, when I saw you last at Gondar? you would have saved yourself a great deal of fatigue and trouble in that dangerous march through Maitsha." To this I answered, "It is hard for me, who am a stranger, to know what is best to be done in such a country as this. I was, as you may have heard, the king's guest, and was favoured by him; it was my duty, therefore, to attend him, especially when he desired it; and such, I am informed, has always been the custom of the country; besides, Ras Michael laid his commands upon me." On this, says Powussen, shaking his head, "You see he cannot forget Michael and the Tigre yet."—"Very naturally," added Gusho, "they were good to him; he was a great man in their time; they gave him considerable sums of money, and he spent it all among his own soldiers, the king's guard, which they had given him to command after the Armenian. Yagoube taught him and his brother George to ride on horseback like the Franks, and play tricks with guns and pikes on horseback: folly, all of it, to be sure;

but I never heard he meddled in affairs, or that he spoke ill of any one, much less did any harm, like those rascals the Greeks, when they were in favour in Joas's time; for it was not their fault they did not direct every thing."—"I hope I never did," said I; "sure I am I never so intended, nor had I any provocation. I have received much good usage from every one; and the honour, if I do not forget, of a great many professions and assurances of friendship from you," said I, turning to Gusho. He hesitated a little, and then added very superciliously, "Aye, aye, we were, as I think, always friends." "You have had," says Powussen, "a devilish many hungry bellies since we left Gondar."—"You will excuse me, Sir," replied I, "as to that article; I at no time ever found any difference whether you was in Gondar or not."—"There," says Gusho, by St Demetrius, there is a truth for you, and you don't often hear that in Begemder. May I suffer death if ever you gave a jar of honey to any white man in your life."—"But I," says Powussen, sitting upright on the floor, and leaving off play, "will give you, Yagoube, a present better than Gusho's paultry jars of honey. I have brought with me," addressing himself to me, "your double-barrelled gun, and your sword, which I took from that son of a wh—e Guebra Mehedin: By St Michael," continued Powussen, "if I had got hold of that infidel, I would have hanged him upon the first tree in the way, for daring to say that he was one of my army, when he committed that unmanly robbery upon your people. The Iteghe, your friend, would yesterday have given me ten loads of wheat for your gun; for she believes I am to carry it back to Begemder again, and do not mean to give it you; but come to my tent to morrow, and you shall have it." I very well understood his meaning, and that he want-

ed a present; but was happy to recover my gun at any rate.

I arose to get away, as what had passed did not please me; for before the king's retreat to Tigre, Gusho had sat in my presence uncovered to the waist, in token of humility, and many a cow, many a sheep, and jar of honey he had sent me; but my importance was now gone with the king: I was fallen, and they were resolved, I saw, to make me sensible of it. I told the queen, on my return, what had passed. "They are both brutes," said she; "but Gusho should have known better."

The next morning, being the 25th, about eight o'clock, I went to Powussen's tent. His camp was on the Kahha, near the church of Ledeta, or the Nativity. After waiting near an hour, I was admitted; two women sat by him; neither handsome, nor cleanly dressed; and he returned me my gun and sword, which was followed by a small present on my part. "This," says he, turning to the women, "is a man who knows every thing that is to come; who is to die, and who is to live; who is to go to the devil, and who not; who loves her husband, and who cuckolds him." "Tell me then, Yagoube," says one of the women, "will Tecla Haimanout and Michael ever come to Gondar again?"—"I do not know who you mean, Madam," said I, "is it the king and the Ras you mean?"—"Call him the king," says the other woman, in a half whisper; "he loves the king."—"Well, aye, come, let it be the king, then," says she; "will the king and Ras Michael ever come to Gondar?"—"Surely," said I, "the king is king, and will go to any part of his dominions he pleases, and when he pleases; do you not hear he is already on his way?"—"Aye, aye, by G—d," says Powussen, "no fear, he'll come with a vengeance; therefore I think it

is high time that I was in Begemder." He then shrugged up his shoulders, and rose, pulling up his trowsers in a very clownish manner, upon which I took my leave. He had kept me standing all the time; and when I came to Koscam, I made my report as usual to the Iteghe, who laughed very heartily, though the king's arrival, which was prophecied, was likely to be a very serious affair to her.

That very day, in the evening, came a servant from Ras Michael, with taunts and severe threats to the queen, to Powussen, and Gusho; he said he was very quickly bringing the king back to Gondar; and being now old, intended to pass the rest of his life in Tigre; he therefore hoped they would await the king's coming to Gondar, and choose a Ras for his successor from among themselves, as he understood they were all friends, and would easily agree, especially as it was to oblige him.

On the 27th, Gusho and Powussen waited upon the queen to take their leave. They declared it was not their intention to stay at Gondar, merely to be alternately the subject of merriment and scoffing to Michael and to Fasil; and upon this they immediately set out on their way home, without drum or trumpet, or any parade whatever.

Immediately after arrived another servant from Fasil to the queen, desiring that Powussen and Gusho might halt at Emfras; adding, that he had just then begun his march from Bure, and would be at Gondar in a few days. Gusho and Powussen did accordingly halt there; and were detained, for the space of six weeks, amused by false pretences and messages, in very uncomfortable quarters, till their armies disbanded, the soldiers, from hunger and constant rains, deserted their leaders, and went every man to his home.

In the beginning of August the queen came to Gondar, and sat on the throne all day. She had not been

there these three years, and I sincerely wished she had not gone then. It was in meditation that day to choose a new king; she was present at that deliberation, and her intention was known to place a son of Aylo, Joas's brother, a mere infant, upon the throne. All those that were in fear of Michael, and it was very general at that time, cried out against an infant king at such a critical period; but, old as that princess was, the desire of reigning had again returned.

Upon the return of the Iteghe that night to Koscam, Sanuda * held a council of the principal officers that had remained at Gondar, and fixed upon one Welleta Girgis, a young man of about 24 years of age, who had indeed been reputed Yasous's son; but his low life and manners had procured him safety and liberty by the contempt they had raised in Ras Michael. His mother, indeed, was of a noble origin, but so reduced in fortune as to have been obliged to gain her livelihood by carrying jars of water for hire. The mother swore this son was begot by Yasous; and as that prince was known not to have been very nice in his choice of mistresses, or limited in their number, it was, perhaps, as likely to be true as not, that Welleta Girgis was his son. He took the name of Socinios. On the morning after, the new king came to Koscam, attended by Sanuda and his party, with guards, and all the ensigns of royalty. He threw himself at the Iteghe's feet, and begged her forgiveness if he had vindicated the rights of his birth without her leave or participation; he declared his resolution to govern entirely by her advice, and begged her to grant his request and come to Gondar, and again take possession of her place as Iteghe, or regent of the kingdom.

* Son of Ras Welled Ieoul, the queen's brother.—E.

It was about the 10th of August that an accident happened, which it was generally thought would have determined Fasil to come to Gondar. A common woman, wife of a Galla at Tchelga, a town upon the frontiers of Sennaar, being at variance with her husband, upbraided him with being the person that, with his own hand, had assassinated the late king Joas. This Galla was immediately seized and sent to Gondar, and was examined before the queen, where I was present. He, with very little hesitation, declared, That, on a night immediately after the battle of Azazo, he was sent for to Ras Michael, who gave him some money and large promises, on condition that he would undertake to murder the king that night. The persons present were Laeca Netcho, and his two sons; Nebrit Tecla, and his two sons; Shalaca Becro, relation to the present king, and Woldo Hawaryat, a monk of Tigre. The prisoner said, he was afraid, if he should refuse, they would murder him for the sake of secrecy. He further said, that they had given him spirits to drink till he was intoxicated, and then delivered to him the keys of the apartments where Joas was confined, and they all went with him to the palace: they found the unfortunate king alone, walking in his apartment, very pensive, and, though at the late hour of twelve at night, dressed in his usual habit. Two of Laeca Netcho's sons attempted to put a cord round his neck; but the king, being young and strong, shewed a disposition to defend himself, and wrested the cord out of the murderers' hands; upon which Zor Woldo (the name of the Galla) struck him a violent blow with a bludgeon on the head, which felled him to the ground: The others, then, with a short cord, strangled him, the monk, Woldo Hawaryat, crying, dispatch him quickly! after this, they carried the body to the neighbouring church of St Ra-

phael, where a grave, or rather hole, was ready, into which they threw it with the clothes, just as he was. The prisoner said, "That, when they were carrying the king's body out of the palace into the church-yard, over a breach in the church-yard wall, they were challenged by a person, who asked them what they were about;" to which they replied, "Burying a stranger who died that day of a pestilential fever."

Immediately upon this confession, the Galla was carried out and hanged upon the daroo-tree, before the king's gate. Many condemned this hasty execution, but many likewise thought it prudent; for he had already named a great part of the people about the queen as accessary to the death of her grandson.

I have said his name was Zor Woldo; he was of the race of Galla, called Toluma, on the borders of Amhara; he had been formerly a servant to Kasmati Becro; was of small stature, thin, and lightly made; his complexion a yellowish black, and singularly ill-favoured. When under the tree, he acknowledged the murder of the king with absolute indifference; nor did he desire any favour, or shew any fear of death. Zor Woldo's examination and declaration were sent immediately to Fasil, who, as usual promised to come to Gondar quickly. The body of Joas was raised also, and laid in the church (in his clothes, just as he was dug up) upon a little straw; his features were easily distinguishable, but some animal had eaten part of his cheek.

The day after, I went from Koscam to Gondar, without acquainting the Iteghe, and took a Greek, called Asalelli Petros, with me; he had been chamberlain to Joas. We went about eleven o'clock in the forenoon to the church of St Raphael, expecting to have seen many as curious as ourselves; but, by reason of the atrociousness of the act, now for the first

time known to be true, and the fear of Ras Michael, threatening Gondar every day, not a living soul was there but a monk belonging to the church itself, who kept the key. It was thought criminal to know what it was apparent Michael had wished to conceal. Petros no sooner saw his master's face, than, saying "It is he!" he ran off with all the speed possible: for my part, I was shocked at the indecent manner in which the body was exposed; it affected me more than the murder itself; for it appeared as if it had been thrown down upon the ground, the head, arms, and legs lying in all sorts of directions, and great part of his haunch and thigh bare. I desired the monk to lock the door, and come along with me to Petros's house. Petros was a merchant who sold carpets, and such sort of goods used in the country, which he brought from Cairo. It was full an hour before we could make him behave sensibly, or deliver me a small Persian carpet, such as Mahometans use to pray upon, that is about seven feet long and four feet broad, and a web of coarse muslin, which I bought of him. I told the priest (for Petros absolutely refused to return to the church) how to lay the body decently upon the carpet, and to cover his face and every part with the muslin cloth, which might be lifted when any body came to see the corpse.

The priest received the carpet with great marks of satisfaction, and told me it was he who had challenged the murderers when carrying the body over the wall; that he knew them well, and suspected they had been about some mischief; and, upon hearing the king was missing the next day, he was firmly convinced it was his body that had been buried. Upon going also to the place early in the morning, he had found one of the king's toes, and part of his foot, not quite covered with earth, from the haste the murderers were in

when they buried him; these he had put properly out of sight, and constantly ever after, as he said, had watched the place, in order to hinder the grave from being disturbed, or any other person being buried there.

About the beginning of October, Guebra Selasse, a servant of the king, and one of the porters in the palace, came on a message to the queen. It was a laconic one, but very easily understood.—"Bury your boy, now you have got him; or, when I come, I will bury him, and some of his relations with him." Joas, upon this, was privately buried. As this Selasse was a favourite of mine, who took care of my shoes when I pulled them off to go into the audience-room, I waited impatiently for this messenger's coming to my apartment, which he did late in the evening. I was alone, and he advanced so softly, that I did not at first hear or know him; but, when the door was shut, he began to give two or three capers; and, pulling out a very large horn, "Drink! drink! G—d d—n!" repeating this two or three times. and brandishing his horn over his head. "Selasse," said I, "have you lost your senses, or are you drunk? you used to be a sober man!"—"And so I am yet," says he, "I have not tasted a morsel since noon; and, being tired of running about on my affairs, I am now come to you for my supper, as I am sure you'll not poison me, for my master's sake, nor for my own either, and I have now enemies enough in Gondar." I then asked, "How is the king?"—"Did you not hear," said he, "Drink!—the king told me to say this to you, that you might know me to be a true messenger." And an Irish servant of mine, opening the door in the instant, thinking it was I that called *drink!* Selasse adroitly continued, "He knows you are curious in horns, and sent you this, desiring me first to get it

filled at the Iteghe's with good red wine, which I have done; and now, Hallo! Drink! Englishman!" He then added in a whisper, when the servant had shut the door, "I'll tell it you all after supper, when the house is quiet, for I sleep here all night, and go to Tigre to-morrow morning."

The time being come, he informed me Ras Michael and Fasil had made peace; Welleta Michael, the Ras's nephew, taken by Fasil at the battle of Limjour, had been the mediator; that the king and Michael, by their wise behaviour, had reconciled Tigre as one man, and that the Ras had issued a proclamation, remitting to the province of Tigre their whole taxes from the day they passed the Tacazze till that time next year, in consideration of their fidelity and services; and this had been solemnly proclaimed, in several places, by beat of drum. The Ras declared, at the same time, that he would, out of his own private fortune, without other assistance, bear the expence of the campaign till he seated the king on his throne in Gondar. A kind of madness, he said, had seized all ranks of people to follow their sovereign to the capital; that the mountain Haramat still held out; but that all the principal friends, both of Za Menfus and Netcho, had been up with the governors of that fortress, offering terms of peace and forgiveness, and desiring they would not be an obstacle in the king's way, and a hindrance to his return, but that all terms had been, as yet refused; "however," says he, "you know the Ras as well as I; he will play them a trick some of these days," winking with his eye, and then crying out, "Drink!"

I asked him if any notice had been taken of the carpet I had procured to cover the body of Joas, and hoped it had given no umbrage. He said, "No; none at all; on the contrary, the king had said twenty kind things upon it; that he was present also when

a priest told it to Ras Michael, who only observed, "Yagoube, who is a stranger in this country, is shocked to see a man taken out of his grave, and thrown like a dog upon the bare floor." This was all Michael said, and he never mentioned a word on the subject afterwards; nor did he, or the king, ever speak of it to me upon their return to Gondar.

The Iteghe, too, had much commended me, so did all the nobility, more than the thing deserved; for surely common humanity dictated as much, and the fear of Michael, which I had not, was the only cause that so proper an action was left in a stranger's power. Even Ozoro Esther, enemy to Joas on account of the death of her husband Mariam Barea, after I had attended her one Sunday from church to the house of the Iteghe, and when she was set down at the head of a circle of all those that were of distinction at the court, calling out aloud to me, as I was passing behind, and pointing to one of the most honourable seats in the room, said, "Sit down there, Yagoube; God has exalted you above all in this country, when he has put it in your power, though but a stranger, to confer charity upon the king of it." All was now acclamation, especially from the ladies; and, I believe, I may safely say, I had never in my life been a favourite of so many at one time.

I dispatched Guebra Selasse with a message to the king, that I was resolved now to try once more a journey to the head of the Nile; that I thought I should have time to be there, and return to Gondar, before the Tacazze was fordable, soon after which I expected he would cross it, and that nothing but want of health would prevent me from joining him in Belessen, or sooner, if any opportunity should offer.

Before I took my last resolutions, I waited upon the queen. She was exceedingly averse to the at-

tempt; she bade me remember what the last trial had cost me; and begged me to defer any further thoughts of it till Fasil arrived in Gondar; that she would then deliver me into his hands, and procure from him sure guides, together with a safe conduct. She bade me beware also of troops of Pagan Galla, which were passing and repassing to and from his army, who, if they fell in with me, would murder me without mercy. She added, that the priests of Gojam and Damot were mortal enemies to all men of my colour, and, with a word, would raise the peasants against me. This was all true; but then many reasons, which I had weighed well, concurred to shew that this opportunity, dangerous as it was, might be the only time in which my enterprise could be practicable; for I was confident a speedy rupture between Fasil and Michael would follow upon the king's return to Gondar. I determined, therefore, to set out immediately without farther loss of time.

CHAP. VIII.

Second Journey to discover the Source of the Nile—Favourable Turn of the King's Affairs in Tigre—We fall in with Fasil's Army at Bamba.

THOUGH the queen shewed very great dislike to my attempting this journey at such a time, yet she did not positively command the contrary; I was prepared, therefore, to leave Gondar the 27th of October 1770, and thought to get a few miles clear of the town, and then make a long stretch the next day. I had received my quadrant, time-keeper, and telescopes from the island of Mitraha, where I had placed them after the affair of Guebra Mehedin, and had now put them in the very best order.

But, about twelve o'clock, I was told a message from Ras Michael had arrived with great news from Tigre. I went immediately to Koscam, as fast as I could gallop, and found there Guebra Christos, a man used to bring the jars of bouza to Ras Michael at his dinner and supper; low men are always employed on such errands, that they may not, from their consequence, excite a desire of vengeance. The message that he brought was, to order bread and beer to be ready for 30,000 men, who were coming with the king, as he had just decamped from before the moun-

tain Haramat, which he had taken, and put Za Menfus to the sword, with every man that was in it: this message struck the queen with such a terror, that she was not visible the whole day.

After asking the messenger if he had any word from the king to me, he said, "Very little;" that the king had called him to tell me he should soon begin his march by Belessen; and that he would send for me to meet him when he should arrive at Mariam Qhha; he told me besides, that the king had got a stone for me, with writing upon it, of old times, which he was bringing to me; that it had been dug up at Axum, and was standing at the foot of his bed, but that he did not order him to tell me this, and he had only learned it from the servants. My curiosity was very much raised to know what this stone could be, but I soon saw it was in vain to endeavour to learn any thing from Guebra Christos; he answered in the affirmative to every inquiry: when I asked if it was blue, it was blue; and if black, it was black; it was round, and square, and oblong, just as I put my question to him: all he knew about it at last, he said, was, that it cured all sort of sickness; and, if a man used it properly, it made him invulnerable and immortal; he did not, however, pretend to warrant this himself, but swore he had the account from a priest of Axum, who knew it. I was perfectly satisfied all further inquiry was unnecessary; he had got a very plentiful portion of bouza from his friends, and was, I saw, fast engaged in the pursuit of more; so I gave him a small present for his good news, and took my leave, my mind being full of reflections upon the king's goodness, who, after such an absence, and in so critical a situation as he then was, still remembered the trifling pursuits in which he had seen me so often engaged.

In the afternoon I received a message from Ozoro Esther, as brought to her by a servant of Ras Michael. It seems the giving up the king's revenue due from Tigre, and all sort of taxes upon the inhabitants, had interested the whole province so strongly, that all of them, as one man, endeavoured to remove the obstacle which stood in the way of the king's return: Michael, moreover, offered peace and pardon to the rebels, certain compensations, and an amnesty of all that was past. All the friends, both of Netcho and Za Menfus, and the other leaders upon the mountain, endeavoured to persuade them to accept the terms offered, whilst all the priests and hermits, eminent for sanctity, became as mediators between them and Ras Michael: this intercourse, though it had no effect upon Za Menfus, had seduced Netcho, and opened a large field for treachery.

In the midst of this treaty, Kefla Yasous, with a detachment of chosen men, in a very stormy night, was appointed to ascend up a private path to that part of the mountain where Netcho kept the principal guard, and being admitted, found the garrison mostly asleep; he surprised and obliged them to surrender, with very little bloodshed; Za Menfus was taken prisoner, and, while Kefla Yasous conducted him to camp, was met by Guebra Mascal, who thrust him through with a lance, as a retaliation for his father's death. Netcho and the rest of the garrison being pardoned, all joined Ras Michael's army. I looked upon these news as a good omen, and experienced a degree of confidence and composure of mind, to which I, for a long time, had been a stranger. I slept sound that night, and it was not till half after nine in the morning that I was ready for my journey.

In the evening before, I had endeavoured to engage

my old companion, Strates, to accompany me on this attempt, as he had done on the former; but the recollection of past dangers and sufferings was not yet banished from his mind; and, upon my asking him to go and see the head of this famous river, he coarsely, according to his stile, answered, "Might the devil fetch him if ever he sought either his head or his tail again."

It was on the 28th of October, at half past nine in the morning, that we left Gondar, and passed the river Kahha at the foot of the town; our route was W. S. W. the road a little rugged, upon the side of a hill, but the day was fair, with sunshine; and a small breeze from the north had risen with the sun, and made the temperature of the air perfectly agreeable. We left the church of Ledeta about a mile on the right, and passed by several poor villages, called Abba Samuel; thence we came to the small river, Shimfa, then to the Dumaza, something larger. Upon the banks of this river, very pleasantly situated, is Azazo, a country-house, built by the late king Yasous, who often retired here to relax himself with his friends. It is surrounded, I may say covered, with orange-trees, so as to be scarcely seen; the trees are grown very large and high, they are planted without order, the only benefit expected from them being the shade. At some small distance is the village Azazo, originally built for the accommodation of the king's servants while he resided there, but now chiefly occupied by monks belonging to the large church of Tecla Haimanout, which is on a little hill adjoining. Azazo, though little, is one of the most cheerful and pleasant villages in the neighbourhood of Gondar. The lemon tree seems to thrive better, and grow higher than the orange; but the house itself is going fast to ruin, as

the kings of this country have a fixed aversion to houses built by their predecessors.

The Dumaza is a very clear and pleasant stream, running briskly over a small bed of pebbles: both this river and the Shimfa come from Woggora on the N. W. they pass the hill of Koscam, called Debra Tzai, join below Azazo, and traversing the flat country of Dembea, they meet the Angrab, which passes by Gondar, and with it fall into the Tacazze, or Atbara *.

At noon we passed a small rivulet, called Azzargiha, and soon after. the Chergue, where there began a most violent storm of rain, which forced us, much against our will, into the village, one of the most miserable I ever entered; it consisted of small hovels built with branches of trees, and covered with thatch of straw. These rains, that fall in the latter season, are what the natives very much depend upon, and without which they could not sow the latter crops; for, though it rains violently every day from May to the beginning of September, by the end of October the ground is so burnt that the country would be unfit for culture.

Our quarters here were so bad, that we were impatient to depart, but came to a water just below Chergue, which quickly made us wish ourselves back in the village; this is a torrent that has no springs in the hills, but only great basons, or reservoirs, of stone; and, though it is dry all the year else, yet, upon a sudden, violent shower, as this was, it swells in

* In this route, which was observed carefully both by Mr Bruce and his assistant, neither the general nor particular map are so complete as could be wished. The topography of Gondar and its vicinity is more defective than might have been expected from the time and other opportunities of so attentive a traveller; the rest of the journey is minutely delineated.—E.

an instant, so that it is impassable for man, or horse, by any device whatever. This violence is of short duration; we waited above half an hour, and then the peasants shewed us a place, some hundred yards above, where it was shallower; but even here we passed with the utmost difficulty, from the impetuosity of the stream, after getting all possible assistance from four people of the village; but we stood much in need of some check to our impatience, so eager were we to get forward and finish our journey before some revolution happened.

We had not many minutes been delivered from this torrent, before we passed two other rivers, the one larger, the other smaller. All these rivers come from the north-west, and have their sources in the mountains a few miles above, towards Woggora, from which, after a short course on the side of the hills, they enter the low, flat country of Dembea, and are swallowed up in the Tzana.

We continued along the side of the hill in a country very thinly inhabited; for, it being directly in the march of the army, the peasants naturally avoided it, or were driven from it. Our road was constantly intersected by rivers, which abound, in the same space, more than in any other country in the world. We then came to the river Derma, the largest and most rapid we had yet met with, and soon after a smaller, called Ghelghel Derma. In the afternoon, at a quarter past three, we passed another river, called Gavi-Corra; these, like the others, all point as radii to the centre of the lake, in which they empty themselves. A little before four o'clock we encamped on the side of the river Kemona. Upon the hill, on the other side of the river, stands the village of that name; it was full of cattle, very few of which we had seen during the fore-part of the journey; we had all that day

travelled six hours and a quarter, which we computed not to exceed 14 miles. The reason of this slowness was the weight of my quadrant, which, though divided into two, required four men to carry it, tied upon bamboo, as upon two chair-poles. The time-keeper and two telescopes employed two men more. We pitched our tent on the side of the river, opposite to the village, and there passed the night.

On the 29th of October, at seven in the morning, we left our station, the river Kemona; our direction was W. S. W.—After about an hour, we came to a church called Abba Abraham, and a village that goes by the same name; it is immediately upon the road on the left hand. At the distance of about a mile are ten or twelve villages, all belonging to the Abuna, and called Ghendi, where many of his predecessors have been buried. The low, hot, unwholesome, woody part of the Abyssinian Kolla, and the feverish, barren province of Walkayt, lay at the distance of about fourteen or sixteen miles on our right. We had hitherto ascended a gentle rising ground in a very indifferent country, the sides of the hill being skirted with little rugged wood, and full of springs, which join as they run down to the low country of Walkayt. We saw before us a small hill, called Guarre, which is to the south-west. At half-past ten we rested under the before-mentioned hill; it stands alone in the plain, in shape like a sugar-loaf, and seems almost as regular as if it had been a work of art. At a quarter past eleven we resumed our journey, our course always nearly west south-west; we passed the small village of Bowiha, at the distance of about a mile; and, on the left, about six miles, is Gorgora, a peninsula that runs into the lake Tzana for several miles.

There was one of the first and most magnificent churches and monasteries of the Portuguese Jesuits, in

the time of their mission to convert this country: Socinios, then king, gave them the grounds, with money for the expence; they built it with their own hands, and lined it elegantly with cedar. The king, who was a zealous Roman Catholic, chose afterwards a country-house for himself there, and encouraged them much by his presents and by his charity. It is one of the pleasantest situations in the world; the vast expanse of the lake is before you; Dembea, Gojam, and Maitsha, flat and rich countries all round, are in view; and the tops of the high hills of Begemder and Woggora close the prospect *.

The lake here, I am told, has plenty of fish, which is more than can be said for many of the other parts of it; the fish are of two kinds, both of them seemingly a species of what the English call bream. I never could make them agree with me, which I attribute to the drug with which they are taken; it is of the nature of *nux vomica*, pounded in a mortar, and thrown into streams, where they run into the lake; the fish, feeding there, are thus intoxicated and taken; however, it would admit of a doubt of this being the reason, because the queen and all the great people in Gondar eat them in Lent without any bad consequences.

The great elevation of the peninsula of Gorgora makes it one of the most healthy, as well as the most beautiful parts of the country; for, out of this neck of land, at several different seasons of the year, the inhabitants of the flat country suffer from malignant fevers. From Gondar hither we had always been edging down to the lake.

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* The greatest difference between Mr Ludolf's map, after Tellez, and Mr Bruce's view of the lake, is in this place.—E.

At a quarter before noon we halted, to rest upon the banks of a small river, called Baha; the country was rich, and cultivated; great part of it, too, was laid out in pasture, and stocked with an immense quantity of cattle. At one o'clock we resumed our journey, going west south-west as before; we were apparently turning to the north end of the lake as short as possible, to set our face due south to the country of the Agows. At a quarter before three we pitched our tents at Bab Baha, after having travelled five hours and three quarters, which we computed to be equal to twelve miles. The first part of our journey this day was not like that of the day before; the road was, indeed, rough, but led through very agreeable vallies and gently rising hills; it appeared, on the whole, however, that we had ascended considerably since we left Gondar.

The country about Bab Baha is the richest in Abyssinia; this on the south, and Woggora on the north, are the two granaries that supply the rest of the kingdom. Bab Baha is a parcel of small villages, more considerable in number and strength than those of Kemona, and is near the lake Tzana. The queen and many of her relations have here their houses and possessions, and these, therefore, being respected by Michael, had not been involved in the devastation of the late war. The villages are all surrounded with Kol-quall trees, as large at the trunk as those we met on the side of the mountain of Taranta, when we ascended it on our journey from Masuah to enter into the province of Tigre; but the trees want much of the beauty of those of Tigre; the branches are fewer in number, less thorny, and less indented, which seems to prove that this is not the climate for them.

The 30th of October, at six in the morning, we continued our journey from Bab Baha, still round-

ing the lake at W. S. W. and on the very brink of it: the country here is all laid out in large meadows of a deep, black, rich soil, bearing very high grass, through the midst of which runs the river Sar Ohha, which, in English, is the Grassy River; it is about forty yards broad, and not two deep, has a soft, clay bottom, and runs from north to south into the lake Tzana.

We turned out of the road to the left at Bab Baha, and were obliged to go up the hill; in a quarter of an hour we reached the high road to Mescala Christos. At seven o'clock we began to turn more to the southward, our course being S. W; three miles and a half on our right remained the village of Tenkel; and four miles and a half that of Tshemmera to the N. N. W.; we were now close to the border of the lake, whose bottom here is a fine sand. Neither the fear of crocodiles, nor other monsters in this large lake, could hinder me from swimming in it for a few minutes. Though the sun was very warm, the water was intensely cold, owing to the many fresh streams that pour themselves continually into the lake Tzana from the mountains. The country here is sown with dora, which is maize, or millet; and another plant, not to be distinguished from our marigold either in size, shape, or foliage; it is called Nook (Polymnia frondosa), and furnishes all Abyssinia with oil for the kitchen, and other uses.

At a quarter past nine we rested a little at Delghi Mariam; the village called, simply, Delghi, adjoining to it, is but small, and on the S. W. is the hill of Goy Mariam, where the queen-mother has a house. All the habitations in this country were burnt by Ras Michael in his return to Gondar after the battle of Fagitta. The mountain Debra Tzai, above Koscam, was seen this day at N. E. and by E. from us.

At a quarter past ten we again set out, our route

being S. W.—At eleven we left the small village Arrico, about two miles on our right. At a quarter past eleven we halted to rest our men; we passed the church of St Michael on our right, and at a quarter past one we passed two small islands in the lake, called Kedami Aret; and, half an hour after, we passed a small river, and came to Mescala Christos, a large village upon a high mountain, the summit of which it occupies entirely; it is surrounded on both sides by a river, and the descent is steep and dangerous. We thought to have staid here all night; but, after mounting the hill with great fatigue and trouble, we found the whole village abandoned, on intelligence that Waragna Fasil was on his march to Gondar, and not far distant.

This intelligence, which came all at once upon us, made us lay aside the thoughts of sleeping that night; we descended the hill of Mescala Christos in great haste, and with much difficulty, and came to the river Kemon below it, clear and limpid, but having little water, running over a bed of very large stones. This river, too, comes from the north-west, and falls into the lake a little below; we rested on its banks half an hour, the weather being very sultry; from this place we had a distinct view of the Nile, where, after crossing the lake, it issues out near Dara, the scene of our former misfortunes; we set it carefully by the compass, and it bore nearly S. W.

We began our journey again at three quarters after two, and at half after three we passed a river, very clear, with little water, the name of which I have forgotten; by the largeness of its bed it seemed to be a very considerable stream in winter; at present it had very little water, but a fine gravelly bottom; here we met multitudes of peasants flying before the army of Fasil, many of whom, seeing us, turned out of the way; one

of these was a servant of Guebra Ehud, brother to Ayto Aylo, my most intimate friend: he told us it was very possible that Fasil would pass us that night, advised us not to linger in the front of such an army, but fall in as soon as possible with his Fit-Auraris, rather than any other of his advanced posts; he was carrying a message to his master's brother at Gondar. I told him I had rather linger in the front of such an army than in the rear of it, and should be very sorry to be detained long, even in the middle of it; that I only wished to salute Fasil, and procure a pass and recommendations from him to Agow Midre.

Ayto Aylo's servant, who was with me, presently made acquaintance with this man, and I trusted him to learn from him as much as he knew about Fasil; the result was, that Fasil pretended to be in a violent hurry, from what motive was not known; but that he, at the same time, marched very slowly, contrary to his usual custom; that his speech and behaviour promised peace, and that he had hurt nobody on the way, but proclaimed constantly, that all people should keep their houses without fear; that Ayto Woldo of Maithsa, a great robber, was his Fit-Auraris, and never distant from him more than three miles; that the troops of Agow, Maitsha, and Damot, were with him, and with some Galla of Gojam and Metchakel composed the van and centre of his army, whilst his rear consisted of wild lawless Galla, whom he had brought from the other side of the Nile from Bizamo, his own country, and were commanded by Ayto Welleta Yasous, his great confident; that these Galla were half a day generally behind him, and there was some talk the same day, or the next, he was to send these invaders home; that he marched as if he was in fear; always took strong posts, but had received every body that came to him, either from the

country or Gondar, affably and kindly enough, but no one knew any thing of his intentions.

About half past four o'clock we fell in with Woldo, his Fit-Auraris, whom I did not know. Ayto Aylo's servant, however, was acquainted with him; we asked him some questions about his master, which he answered very candidly and discreetly; on his part he made no inquiry, and seemed to have little curiosity about us; he had taken his post, and was advancing no farther that night. I made him a little present at taking my leave, which he seemed surprised at; and, very much contrary to my expectations, had some difficulty about receiving, saying, he was ashamed that he had not any return for us; that he was a soldier, and had nothing but the lance in his hand, and the goat's skin on his shoulder's, neither of which he could be sure to possess for twenty-four hours; he then told us that Fasil had, by that time, pitched his tent at Bamba, within a mile of us, and was to dispatch the wild Galla thence to their own country: he gave us a man, who, he said, would take care of us, and desired us not to dismiss him till we had seen Fasil, and not to pitch our tent, but rather to go into one of the empty houses of Bamba, as all the people had fled. We now parted equally contented with each other; at the same time I saw he sent off another man, who went swiftly on, probably to carry advice of us to Fasil. We had staid with him something less than half an hour.

CHAP. IX.

Interview with Fasil—Transactions in the Camp.

We found Bamba a collection of villages in a valley, now filled with soldiers. We went to the left with our guide, and got a tolerable house, but the door had been carried away. Fasil's tent was pitched a little below us, larger than the rest, but without further distinction: it was easily known, however, by the lights about it, and by the nagareet, which still continued beating: he was then just alighting from his horse. I immediately sent Ayto Aylo's servant, whom I had with me, to present my compliments, and acquaint him of my being on the road to visit him. I thought now all my difficulties were over: for I knew it was in his power to forward us to our journey's end; and his servants, whom I saw at the palace near the king, when Fasil was invested with his command, had assured me, not only of an effectual protection, but also of a magnificent reception, if I chanced to find him in Maitsha.

It was now, however, near eight at night of the 30th before I received a message to attend him. I repaired immediately to his tent. After announcing myself, I waited about a quarter of an hour before I was admitted; he was sitting upon a cushion, with a lion's skin upon it, and another stretched like a car-

pet, before his feet, and had a cotton cloth, something like a dirty towel, wrapped about his head; his upper cloak, or garment, was drawn tight about him over his neck and shoulders, so as to cover his hands; I bowed, and went forward to kiss one of them, but it was so entangled in the cloth, that I was obliged to kiss the cloth instead of the hand. This was done either as not expecting I should pay him that compliment, (as I certainly should not have done, being one of the king's servants, if the king had been at Gondar) or else it was intended for a mark of disrespect, which was very much of a piece with the rest of his behaviour afterwards.

There was no carpet or cushions in the tent, and only a little straw, as if accidentally, thrown thinly about it. I sat down upon the ground, thinking him sick, not knowing what all this meant; he looked stedfastly at me, saying, half under his breath, "Endett nawi? bogo nawi?" which, in Amharic, is, "How do you do? Are you very well?" I made the usual answer, "Well, thank God." He again stopt, as for me to speak; there was only one old man present, who was sitting on the floor mending a mule's bridle. I took him at first for an attendant, but, observing that a servant, uncovered, held a candle to him, I thought he was one of his Galla; but then I saw a blue silk thread, which he had about his neck, which is a badge of Christianity all over Abyssinia, and which a Galla would not wear. What he was, I could not make out; he seemed, however, to be a very bad cobler, and took no notice of us.

Ayto Aylo's servant, who stood behind me, pushed me with his knee, as a sign that I should speak, which I accordingly began to do with some difficulty. "I am come," said I, "by your invitation, and the king's

leave, to pay my respects to you in your own government, begging that you would favour my curiosity so far as to favour me to see the country of the Agows, and the source of the Abay (or Nile), part of which I have seen in Egypt." "The source of the Abay!" exclaimed he, with a pretended surprise, "do you know what you are saying? Why, it is God knows where, in the country of the Galla, wild, terrible people. The source of the Abay! Are you raving!" repeats he again: "Are you to get there, do you think, in a twelvemonth, or more, or when?" "Sir," said I, "the king told me it was near Sacala, and still nearer Geesh; both villages of the Agows, and both in your government." "And so you know Sacala and Geesh?" says he, whistling and half angry *." "I can repeat the names that I hear," said I, "all Abyssinia knows the head of the Nile."—"Ay," says he, imitating my voice and manner, "but all Abyssinia won't carry you there, that I promise you."—"If you are resolved to the contrary," said I, "they will not; I wish you had told the king so in time, then I should not have attempted it; it was relying upon you alone I came so far, confident, if all the rest of Abyssinia could not protect me there, that your word singly could do it."

He now put on a look of more complacency. "Look you, Yagoube," says he, "it is true I can do it; and, for the king's sake, who recommended it to me, I would do it; but the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, has sent to me, to desire me not to let you

* This affected ignorance was probably intended to bring me to mention the donation the king had given me of Geesh, which he never much relished, and made effectually useless to me.

pass further; he says it is against the law of the land to permit Franks, like you, to go about the country, and that he has dreamed something ill will befal me, if you go into Maitsha." I was as much irritated as I thought it possible for me to be. "So so," said I, "the time of priests, prophets, and dreamers is coming on again."—"I understand you," says he, laughing for the first time; "I care as little for priests as Michael does, and for prophets too, but I would have you consider the men of this country are not like yours; a boy of these Galla would think nothing of killing a man of your country. You white people are all effeminate; you are like so many women; you are not fit for going into a province where all is war, and inhabited by men, warriors from their cradle."

I saw he intended to provoke me; and he had succeeded so effectually, that I should have died, I believe, if I had not, imprudent as it was, told him my mind in reply. "Sir," said I, "I have passed through many of the most barbarous nations in the world; all of them, excepting this clan of yours, have some great men among them, above using a defenceless stranger ill. But the worst and lowest individual among the most uncivilized people, never treated me as you have done to-day, under your own roof, where I have come so far for protection." He asked, "How?' "You have, in the first place," said I, "publicly called me Frank, the most odious name in this country, and sufficient to occasion me to be stoned to death without further ceremony, by any set of men, wherever I may present myself. By Frank, you mean one of the Romish religion, to which my nation is as adverse as yours; and again, without having ever seen any of my countrymen but myself, you have discovered, from that specimen, that we are all cowards and effeminate people, like, or inferior to, your boys or women. Look

you, Sir, you never heard that I gave myself out as more than an ordinary man in my own country, far less to be a pattern of what is excellent in it. I am no soldier, though I know enough of war, to see yours are poor proficients in that trade. But there are soldiers, friends and countrymen of mine, (one presents himself to my mind at this instant *,) who would not think it an action in his life to vaunt of, that with 500 men he had trampled all you naked savages into dust." On this Fasil made a feigned laugh, and seemed rather to take my freedom amiss. It was, doubtless, a passionate and rash speech. "As to myself," continued I, "unskilled in war as I am, could it be now without further consequence, let me but be armed in my own country-fashion, on horseback, as I was yesterday, I should, without thinking myself overmatched, fight the two best horsemen you shall choose from this your army of famous men, who are warriors from their cradle; and if, when the king arrives, you are not returned to your duty, and we meet again, as we did at Limjour, I will pledge myself, with his permission, to put you in mind of this promise, and leave the choice of these men in your option." This did not make things better.

He repeated the word *duty* after me, and would have replied, but my nose burst out in a stream of blood; and, that instant, Aylo's servant took hold of me by the shoulder, to hurry me out of the tent. Fasil seemed to be a good deal concerned, for the blood streamed out upon my clothes. The old man likewise assisted me when out of the tent; I found he was Guebra Ehud, Ayto Aylo's brother, whose servant we had

* It is with pleasure I confess, the man, in my mind, was my brave friend, Sir William Erskine.

met on the road. I returned, then, to my tent, and the blood was soon staunched by washing my face with cold water. I sat down to recollect myself, and the more I calmed, the more I was dissatisfied at being put off my guard; but it is impossible to conceive the provocation without having proved it. I have felt but too often how much the love of our native soil increases by our absence from it; and how jealous we are of comparisons made to the disadvantage of our countrymen by people, who, all proper allowances being made, are generally not their equals, when they would boast themselves their superiors. I will confess further, in gratification to my critics, that I was, from my infancy, of a sanguine, passionate disposition; very sensible of injuries that I had neither provoked nor deserved; but much reflection, from very early life, continual habits of suffering in long and dangerous travels, where nothing but patience would do, had, I flattered myself, abundantly subdued my natural proneness to feel offences, which, common sense might teach me, I could only revenge upon myself.

However, upon further consulting my own breast, I found there was another cause had co-operated strongly with the former in making me lose my temper at this time, which, upon much greater provocation, I had never done before. I found now, as I thought, that it was decreed, decisively, my hopes of arriving at the source of the Nile were for ever ended; all my trouble, all my expences, all my time, and all my sufferings for so many years, were thrown away, from no greater obstacle than the whimsies of one barbarian, whose good inclinations, I thought, I had long before sufficiently secured; and, what was worse, I was now got within less than forty miles of the place I so much wished to see; and my hopes were ship-

wrecked upon the last, as well as the most unexpected, difficulty I had to encounter.

I was just going to bed, when Ayto Welleta Michael, Ras Michael's nephew, taken at Limjour, and a prisoner with Fasil, though now at large, came into the tent. I need not repeat the discourse that passed between us; it was all condolence upon the ill-usage I had met with. He cursed Fasil, called him a thousand opprobrious names, and said, Ras Michael one day would shew me his head upon a pole: he hinted, that he thought Fasil expected a present, and imagined that I intended to pass the king's recommendation on him in the place of it. "I have a present," said I, "and a very handsome one; but I never thought that, while his nagareet was still beating, and when he had scarcely pitched his tent, when he was tired, and I no less so, that it was then a time to open baggage for this purpose; if he had waited till to-morrow, he should have had a gratification which would have contented him."

"Well, well," said Welleta Michael, "as for your journey, I shall undertake for that, for I heard him giving orders about it when I came away, even though he expects no present. What does the gratifying your curiosity cost him? he would be ashamed to refuse you permission; his own vanity would hinder him." This assurance, more than all the quieting draughts in the world, composed my mind, and brought me to myself. I went to bed, and falling into a sound sleep, was waked near mid-night by two of Fasil's servants, who brought each of them a lean live sheep; they said they had brought the sheep, and were come to ask how I was, and to stay all night to watch the house, for fear of the thieves in the army; they likewise brought their master's orders for me to come early in the morning to him, as he wanted to dispatch me on

my journey before he gave the Galla liberty to return. This dispelled every doubt, but it raised my spirits so much, that, out of impatience for morning, I slept very little more that night.

It was a time of year when it was not broad day till after six o'clock; I went to the camp, and saw Guebra Ehud, who confirmed what Welleta Michael had said, and that Fasil had given orders for bringing several of his own horses for me, to choose which he was to present me with; in effect, there were about twelve horses, all saddled and bridled, which were led by a master-groom. I was very indifferent about these horses, having a good one of my own, and there was none of these that would in this country have brought 7l. at a market; the servant, who seemed very officious, pitched upon a bright-bay poney, the fattest of the whole, but not strong enough in appearance to carry me; he assured me, however, the horse had excellent paces, was a great favourite of Fasil's, but too *dull* and *quiet* for him, and desired me to mount him, though he had no other furniture but the wooden part of a saddle, covered with thin, brown leather, and, instead of stirrups, iron rings. All the Abyssinians, indeed, ride bare-footed and legged, and put only their great toe into the iron ring, holding it betwixt their great and second toe, as they are afraid of being entangled by the stirrup if their horse falls, should they put their foot into it.

I consented to try him very willingly. A long experience with the Moors in Barbary put me above fear of any horse, however vicious, which I had no reason to think this was; besides, I rode always with a Barbary bridle, broad stirrups, and short stirrup-leathers, after their fashion; the bridle is known to every scholar in horsemanship, and should be used by every light-horseman or dragoon, for the most vi-

cious horse cannot advance a yard against this bridle, when in a strong hand. I ordered the seis, or groom, to change the saddle and bridle for mine, and I had on a pair of spurs with very long and sharp rowels. I saw presently the horse did not like the bit, but that I did not wonder at; my saddle was what is called a war saddle, high behind and before, so unless the horse fell, it was impossible to throw the rider. I had also a thick, knotty stick, or truncheon, of about three feet long, instead of a whip, and well was it for me I was so prepared for him.

For the first two minutes after I mounted, I do not know whether I was most in the earth or in the air; he kicked behind, reared before, leaped like a deer, all four off the ground, and it was some time before I recollected myself; he then attempted to gallop, taking the bridle in his teeth, but got a check which staggered him; he, however, continued to gallop; and, finding I slacked the bridle on his neck, and that he was at ease, he set off and ran away as hard as he could, flinging out behind every ten yards; the ground was very favourable, smooth, soft, and up-hill. We passed the post of the Fit Auraris like lightning, leaving him exceedingly surprised at seeing me make off with his master's horse. He was then going to the head-quarters, but said nothing at passing; we went down one hill aukwardly enough; and, when we got to a small plain and a brook below, the horse would have gone easily enough either at a trot or walk up the other, but I had only to shake my stirrups to make him set off again at a violent gallop, and when he stopt he trembled all over. I was now resolved to gain a victory, and hung my upper cloak upon a tree, the attempting which occasioned a new battle; but he was obliged to submit. I then, between the two hills, half up the one and half up the other, wrought him

so that he had no longer either breath or strength, and I began to think he would scarce carry me to the camp.

I now found that he would walk very quietly; that a gentle touch of the spur would quicken him, but that he had not strength or inclination to gallop; and there was no more rearing or kicking up behind. I put my cloak, therefore, about me in the best manner possible, just as if it had never been ruffled or discomposed by motion, and in this manner, repassing the Fit-Aurari's quarters, came in sight of the camp, where a large field sown with teff, and much watered, was in front. I went out of the road into this field, which I knew was very soft and deep, and therefore favourable for me. Coming near Fasil's tent, the horse stopt upon gently straitening the bridle, as a horse properly broke would have done, on which my servant took the saddle and bridle, and returned the groom his own.

The poor beast made a sad figure, cut in the sides to pieces, and bleeding at the jaws; and the seis, the rascal that put me upon him, being there when I dismounted, he held up his hands upon seeing the horse so mangled, and began to testify great surprise upon the supposed harm I had done. I took no notice of this, only said, "Carry that horse to your master; he may venture to ride him now, which is more than either he or you dared to have done in the morning."

As my own horse was bridled and saddled, and I found myself violently irritated, I resolved to ride to compose myself a little before another interview; for I thought this last piece of treachery, that might have cost me my legs and arms, was worse than what passed in the tent the night before; it seemed to be aimed at my life, and to put a very effectual stop to the

continuing my journey. My servant had in his hand a short double-barelled gun, loaded with shot, for killing any uncommon bird we might see by the way. I took the gun and my horse, and went up the side of the green hill about half way, in fair view of the camp, and considerably above it; I gallopped, trotted, and made my horse perform every thing he was capable of. He was excellent in his movements, and very sufficiently trained; this the Galla beheld at once with astonishment and pleasure; they are naturally fond of horses, sufficiently perfect in the useful part of horsemanship, to be sensible of the beauty of the ornamental.

There was then, as there always is, a vast number of kites following the camp, which are quite familiar, and live upon the carrion; choosing two gliding near me, I shot first one on the right, then one on the left; they both fell dead on the ground; a great shout immediately followed from the spectators below, to which I seemingly paid no attention, pretending absolute indifference, as if nothing extraordinary had been done. I then dismounted from my horse, giving him and my gun to my servant, and, sitting down on a large stone, I began to apply some white paper to staunch a small scratch the first horse had given me on the leg, by rubbing it against a thorn tree: as my trowsers, indeed, were all stained with the blood of the first horse, much cut by the spur, it was generally thought I was wounded.

Fasil on this sent for me to come immediately to him, having just got up from a sleep after a whole night's debauch. He was at the door of the tent when I began riding my own horse, and, having seen the shots, ordered the kites immediately to be brought him: his servants had laboured in vain to find the hole where the ball, with which I had killed the

birds, had entered; for none of them had ever seen small-shot, and I did not undeceive them. I had no sooner entered his tent than he asked me, with great earnestness, to shew him where the ball had gone through. I gave him no explanation; "but, if you have really an inclination to kill me," said I, "you had better do it here, where I have servants that will bury me, and tell the king and the Iteghe the kind reception you have given strangers whom they have recommended." He asked what I meant? What was the matter now? and I was going to answer, when Welleta Michael told him the whole story, greatly in my favour, indeed, but truly and plainly as to the trick about the horse. The Fit-Aurariş Woldo said something to him in Galla, which plainly made the matter worse. Fasil now seemed in a terrible fury, and said three words to the Fit-Aurariş, in Galla, who immediately went out; and, as my servants told me afterwards, after sending for the seis, or groom, who had brought me the horse, the first salutation that he gave him was a blow over the head with a bludgeon, which felled him to the ground, then a dozen more strokes, and ordered him to be put in irons, after which he returned into the tent.

Fasil, who heard I was hurt, and saw the quantity of blood upon my trowsers, held up his hands with a shew of horror and concern, which plainly was not counterfeited: he protested, by every oath he could devise, that he knew nothing about the matter, and was asleep at the time; that he had no horses with him worth my acceptance, except the one that he rode, but that any horse known to be his, driven before me, would be a passport, and procure me respect among all the wild people whom I might meet, and for that reason only he had thought

of giving me a horse. He repeated his protestations that he was innocent, and heartily sorry for the accident, which, indeed, he appeared to be: he told me the groom was in irons, and that, before many hours passed, he would put him to death. I was perfectly satisfied with his sincerity. I wished to put an end to this disagreeable conversation: "Sir," said I, "as this man has attempted my life, according to the laws of the country, it is I that should name the punishment." "It is very true," replied Fasil, "take him, Yagoube, and cut him in a thousand pieces, if you please, and give his body to the kites." "Are you really sincere in what you say," said I, "and will you have no after excuses?" He swore solemnly he would not. "Then," said I, "I am a Christian: the way my religion teaches me to punish my enemies is by doing good for evil; and therefore I keep you to the oath you have sworn, and desire my friend, the Fit-Auraris, to set the man at liberty, and put him in the place he held before, for he has not been undutiful to you."

I need not say what were the sentiments of the company upon the occasion; they seemed to be most favourable to me: old Guebra Ehud could not contain himself, but got out of the dark corner, and squeezed both of my hands in his; and turning to Fasil, said, "Did not I tell you what my brother Aylo thought about this man?" Welleta Michael said "He was just the same all through Tigre." Fasil, in a low voice, replied, "A man that behaves as he does may go through any country." They then all begged that I would take care of my wound, looking at the blood upon my trowsers. I told them it was already staunched; and turning to Fasil, said, "We white people, you see, are not so terrified at seeing our own blood as you supposed we were."

He then desired that the tent might be cleared for a short time, and we all went out.

About ten minutes after, I was called in to partake of a great breakfast; honey and butter, and raw beef in abundance, as also some stewed dishes that were very good. I was very hungry, having tasted nothing since dinner the day before; and I had had much exercise of body as well as of mind. We were all very cheerful, every one saying something about the Agows, or of the Nile; and Fasil declaring, if it was peace, he would carry me to his country across the Nile as far as the kingdom of Narea. I thanked him. "You are at peace," said I, "with the king and the Ras, and going to meet them at Gondar."—"At Gondar!" says he, "no; I hope not this time; the Ras has work enough on his hands for the rest of his life." "What work?" said I; "Why, the mountain," replies he. "The mountain Aromata?" "The same," says he; "You never saw such a place; Lamalmon, and all the mountains of Abyssinia, are nothing to it: he was, when at the prime of life, fifteen years in taking it from this Netcho's father." "But he has been luckier this time," replied I, "by fourteen years." "How!" says he, with some amazement. "Pardon me," said I, "if I have unawares told you unwelcome news, but the mountain is taken, the garrison put to the sword, and Za Menfus, after surrendering, slain in cold blood by Guebra Mascal, in revenge for the death of his father." Fasil had in his hand a blue cut-glass goblet, gilt round the edges with gold. I had bought it at Cairo, with several other articles of the same kind, from a merchant who procured them from Trieste. I had given it to the king, who drank out of it himself, and had sent it as an honourable token to Fasil from Dingleber, the day when they made peace, after the battle of Limjour. Upon hear-

ing what I said, he threw it violently upon the ground, and broke it into a thousand pieces. "Take care what you say, Yagoube," says he; "take care this be not a lie; tell it me again." I told him the whole circumstances from beginning to end; how the news had come to the Iteghe—who had brought the intelligence- how it had come from the Ras to Ozoro Esther—and how Kefla Yasous had surprised the mountain by treachery, having first lulled the besieged asleep by a negociation, and a proposed mediation of the priests and hermits. On this Fasil observed, it was the very way Michael took it last time; and, putting his forefinger in his mouth, bit it very hard, crying, "Fool, fool, was he not warned?" We all were again dismissed from the tent, and staid out about a quarter of an hour, when we were again called in.

I cannot say but I enjoyed heartily the fright I had visibly given him; it seemed to me that Aylo's brother, Guebra Ehud, was the only person whom he consulted; for it was he alone that remained with him in his tent when we entered; he had changed his dress; a man was combing his hair, and perfuming it; and he had a new, white, fine cotton cloth thrown about his middle loosely, which covered his legs and feet, his breasts, neck, and shoulders, being quite naked; he rose half up from his seat when I came in, made me sit down on a cushion beside him, and was going to speak, when I resolved to have the first word, for fear he should engage me in more discussions. "Your continual hurry," said I, "all the times I have seen you, has put it out of my power till now to make you the acknowledgment it is ordinary for strangers to present when they visit great men in their own country, and ask favours of them." I then took a napkin, and opened it before him; he seem-

ed to have forgot the present altogether; but from that moment I saw his countenance changed, he was like another man. "O Yagoube," says he," a present to me! you should be sensible that is perfectly needless; you were recommended to me by the King and the Ras; you know," says he, "we are friends, and I would do twenty times as much for yourself, without recommendation from either; besides, I have not behaved to you like a great man."

It was not a very hard thing to conquer these scruples; he took the several pieces of the present, one by one, in his hands, and examined them; there was a crimson silk sash, made at Tunis, about five yards long, with a silk fringe of the same colour; it was as beautiful a web of silk as ever I saw; it had a small waved pattern wrought in it; the next was a yellow, with a red narrow border, or stripe, and a silver-wrought fringe, but neither so long nor so thick as the other; the next were two Cyprus manufactured sashes, silk and cotton, with a satin stripe, the one broader than the other, but five yards long each; the next was a Persian pipe, with a long pliable tube, or worm, covered with Turkey leather, with an amber mouth-piece, and a crystal vase for smoking tobacco through water, a great luxury in the eastern countries; the next were two blue bowls, as fine as the one he had just then broken, and of the same sort. He shoved them from him, laughing, and said, "I will not take them from you, Yagoube; this is downright robbery; I have done nothing for this, which is a present for a king." "It is a present to a friend," said I "often of more consequence to a stranger than a king; I always except your king, who is the stranger's best friend."—Though he was not easily disconcerted, he seemed at this time, to be very nearly so.—"If you will not receive them," continued I,

" such as they are offered, it is the greatest affront ever was put upon me; I can never, you know, receive them again."

By this he was convinced. More feeble arguments would indeed have satisfied him, and he folded up the napkin with all the articles, and gave them to an officer; after which the tent was again cleared for consultation; and, during this time, he had called his man of confidence, whom he was to send with us, and instructed him properly. I saw plainly that I had gained the ascendant; and, in the expectation of Ras Michael's speedily coming to Gondar, he was as willing to be on his journey the one way, as I was the other. I had ordered my servants and baggage to set out on the road to Dingleber before me, sending Ayto Aylo's servant along with them, leaving me only my horse and a common Abyssinian servant to follow them: all had been ready since early in the morning, and they had set out accordingly with very great alacrity.

It was about one o'clock, or after it, when I was admitted to Fasil: he received me with great complacency, and would have had me sit down on the same cushion with himself, which I declined. " Friend Yagoube," says he, " I am heartily sorry that you did not meet me at Bure before I set out; there I could have received you as I ought, but I have been tormented with a multitude of barbarous people, who have turned my head, and whom I am now about to dismiss. I go to Gondar in peace, and to keep peace there, for the king on this side the Tacazze has no other friend than me; Powussen and Gusho are both traitors, and so Ras Michael knows them to be. I have nothing to return you for the present you have given me, for I did not expect to meet a man like you here in the fields; but you

will quickly be back; we shall meet on better terms at Gondar; the head of the Nile is near at hand; a horseman, express, will arrive there in a day. I have given you a good man, well known in this country to be my servant; he will go to Geesh with you, and return you to a friend of Ayto Aylo's and mine, Shalaka Welled Amlac; he has the dangerous part of the country wholly in his hands, and will carry you safe to Gondar; my wife is at present in his house: fear nothing, I shall answer for your safety: When will you set out? to-morrow?"

I replied, with many thanks for his kindness, "that I wished to proceed immediately, and that my servants were already far off on the way. You are going to dismiss those wild people; I should wish to be as clear of them as possible; I intend to travel long journies, till we part (as I understand we shall do) from the route that they are taking."

"You are very much in the right," says Fasil; "it was only in the idea that you was hurt with that accursed horse that I would have wished you to stay till to-morrow; but throw off these bloody clothes, they are not decent; I must give you new ones, you are my vassal." I bowed. "The king has granted you Geesh, where you are going, and I must invest you." A number of his servants hurried me out; Guebra Ehud, Welleta Michael, and the Fit-Auraris, attended me. I presently threw off my trowsers, and my two upper garments, and remained in my waistcoat; these were presently replaced by new ones, and I was brought back in a minute to Fasil's tent, with only a fine loose muslin under garment or cloth round me, which reached to my feet. Upon my coming back to the tent, Fasil took off the one that he had put on himself new in the morning, and put it about my shoulders with his own hand, his servants throwing

another immediately over him, saying at the same time to the people, "Bear witness, I give to you, Yagoube, the Agow Geesh, as fully and freely as the king has given it me." I bowed and kissed his hand, as is customary for feudatories, and he then pointed to me to sit down.

"Hear what I say to you," continued Fasil; "I think it right for you to make the best of your way now; for you will be the sooner back at Gondar. You need not be alarmed at the wild people you speak of, who are going after you, though it is better to meet them coming this way, than when they are going to their homes; they are commanded by Welleta Yasous, who is your friend, and is very grateful for the medicines you sent him from Gondar: he has not been able to see you, being so much busied with those wild people; but he loves you, and will take care of you, and you must give me more of that physic when we meet at Gondar." I again bowed, and he continued—"Hear me what I say; you see those seven people (I never saw more thief-like fellows in my life),—these are all leaders and chiefs of the Galla—savages, if you please; they are all your brethren." I bowed. "You may go through their country as if it were your own, without a man hurting you: you will be soon related to them all; for it is their custom that a stranger of distinction, like you, when he is their guest, sleeps with the sister, daughter, or near relation of the principal men among them. I dare say," adds he archly, "you will not think the customs of the Galla contain greater hardships than those of Amhara." I bowed, but thought to myself, I shall not put them to the trial. He then jabbered something to them in Galla, which I did not understand. They all answered by the wildest howl I ever heard, and

struck themselves upon the breast, apparently assenting.

"When Ras Michael," continued he, "came from the battle of Fagitta, the eyes of forty-four, brethren and relations of these people present, were pulled out at Gondar, the day after he arrived, and they were exposed upon the banks of the river Angrab to starve, where most of them, I believe, were devoured by the hyæna: you took three of them up to your house; nourished, clothed, protected, and kindly treated them." "They are now in good health," said I, "and want nothing: the Iteghe will deliver them to you. The only other thing I have done to them was, I got them baptised: I do not know if that will displease them; I did it as an additional protection to them, and to give them a title to the charity of the people of Gondar." "As for that," says he, "they don't care the least about baptism; it will neither do them good nor harm; they don't trouble themselves about these matters; give them meat and drink, and you will be very welcome to baptise them all from morning to night; after such good care, these Galla are all your brethren, they will die for you before they see you hurt." He then said something to them in Galla again, and they all gave another assent, and made a shew of kissing my hand.

They sat down; and, I must own, if they entertained any good-will to me, it was not discernible in their countenances. "Besides this," continued Fasil, "you was very kind and courteous to my servants while at Gondar, and said many favourable things of me before the king; you sent me a present also, and, above all, when Joas my master's body, was dug up from the church-yard of St Raphael, and all Gondar were afraid to shew it the least respect, dreading the vengeance of Ras Michael, you, a stranger, who had ne-

ver seen him, nor received benefit from him, at your own expence paid that attention to his remains which would have better become many at Gondar, and me in particular, had I been within reach, or had intelligence of the matter: now, before all these men, ask me any thing you have at heart, and, be it what it may, they know I cannot deny it you." He delivered this in a tone and gracefulness of manner, superior, I think, to any thing I had ever before seen, although the Abyssinians are all orators, as, indeed, are most barbarians. "Why then," said I, "by all those obligations you are pleased to mention, of which you have made a recital so truly honourable to me, I ask you the greatest favour that man can bestow upon me—send me, as conveniently as possible, to the head of the Nile, and return me and my attendants in safety, after having dispatched me quickly, and put me under no constraint that may prevent me from satisfying my curiosity in my own way." "This," says he, "is no request, I have granted it already; besides, I owe it to the commands of the king, whose servant I am. Since, however, it is so much at your heart, go in peace, I will provide you with all necessaries. If I am alive, and governor of Damot, as you are, we all know, a prudent and sensible man, unsettled as the state of the country is, nothing disagreeable can befal you."

He then turned again to his seven chiefs, who all got up, himself and I, Guebra Ehud, Welleta Michael, and the Fit-Auraris; we all stood round in a circle, and raised the palm of our hands, while he and his Galla together repeated a prayer about a minute long; the Galla seemingly with great devotion. "Now," says Fasil, "go in peace, you are a Galla; this is a curse upon them, and their children, their corn, grass, and cattle, if ever they lift their hand against you, or

yours, or do not defend you to the utmost, if attacked by others, or endeavour to defeat any design they may hear is intended against you." Upon this I offered to kiss his hand before I took my leave, and we all went to the door of the tent, where there was a very handsome grey horse bridled and saddled. "Take this horse," says Fasil, "as a present from me; it is not so good as your own, but, depend upon it, it is not of the kind that rascal gave you in the morning; it is the horse which I rode upon yesterday, when I came here to encamp; but do not mount it yourself, drive it before you, saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Maitsha will touch you when he sees that horse; it is the people of Maitsha, whose houses Michael has burnt, that you have to fear, and not your friends the Galla."

I then took the most humble and respectful leave of him possible, and also of my new-acquired brethren the Galla, praying inwardly I might never see them again. I recommended myself familiarly and affectionately to the remembrance of Welleta Michael, the Ras's nephew, as well as Guebra Ehud; and, turning to Fasil, according to the custom of the country to superiors, asked him leave to mount on horseback before him, and was speedily out of sight. Shalaka Woldo (the name of my guide) did not set out with me, being employed about some affairs of his own; but he presently after followed, driving Fasil's horse before him.

CHAP. X.

Leave Bamba, and continue our Journey southward —Fall in with Fasil's Pagan Galla—Encamp on the Kelti.

At Bamba begins a valley full of small hills and trees, all brush-wood, none of them high enough for timber. On the right hand of the valley the hills slope gently up, the ground is firm, and grass short like sheep pasture, the hills on the left are steeper and more craggy; the lower part of the valley had been cleared of wood, and sown with different sorts of grain, by the industry of the inhabitants of the village of that name—industry that had served them to very little purpose, as the encampment of this wild army destroyed in one night every vestige of culture they had bestowed upon it.

Shalaka Woldo was not, to all appearance, a man to protect a stranger in the middle of a retreating army, disbanded as this was, and returning to very distant countries, perhaps never to be assembled again; yet this man was chosen by one that perfectly knew he was, above all others, capable of the trust he had reposed in him; he was about 55 years of age, was by birth an Agow, and had served Fasil's father from his infancy, when Kasmati Eshte succeeded to

the government of Damot, upon old Fasil's death *; he had been his servant likewise, as had young Fasil, so they were both at one time fellow-domestics of Kasmati Eshte.

When Fasil had slain this nobleman, and succeeded to his father's government of Damot, Shalaka Woldo was taken into his service as an old servant of his father; it seemed his merit had not entitled him to further advancement; he had no covering on his head, except long, bushy, black hair, which just began to be mingled with grey, but no beard, the defect of all his countrymen. He had a cotton cloth thrown about his shoulders in many different forms, occasionally as his fancy suggested to him; but, unless at night, laid it generally upon one of the mules, and walked himself, his body naked, his shoulders only covered with a goat's skin in form of what the women called a tippet; he had also a pair of coarse cotton trowsers that reached to the middle of his thigh, and these were fastened at the waistband by a coarse cotton sash, or girdle, which went six or seven times about his waist, and in which he stuck a crooked knife, the blade about ten inches long, and three inches where broadest, which was the only weapon he wore, and served him to cut his meat, rather than for any offence or defence; for a man of consequence, as he was, could not suppose a possibility of danger while he was in the territory of his master. Sometimes he had a long pipe in his hand, being a great smoker; at other times, a stick of about three feet long, something thicker than one's thumb, with which he dealt about him very

* The person here called old Fasil, is Kasmati Waragna, in the time of Yasous II.

liberally, either to man, woman, or beast, upon the slightest provocation; he was bare-legged and footed, and without any mule, but kept up with us easily at whatever pace we went. With all this he was exceedingly sagacious and cunning, and seemed to penetrate the meaning of our discourse, though in a language of which he did not understand a syllable.

As for Shalaka Welled Amlac, he was a man whom I shall hereafter mention as having been recommended to me by Ayto Aylo soon after my coming to Gondar. I did not, however, choose to let Fasil know of this connection, for fear he might lead him to some gainful imposition for his own account in the course of my journey through Maitsha.

At a quarter past two o'clock of the 31st of October, we halted for a little on the banks of the river Chergue, a small and not very rapid stream, which coming from the south-west, runs N. E. and loses itself in the lake Tzana. At three o'clock in the afternoon we passed the small river of Dingleber*, and in a quarter of an hour after came to a village of that name, situated upon the top of a rock, which we ascended; here the road comes close to the end of the lake, and between it and the rock is a very narrow pass, through which all provisions from the Agows and Maitsha must go; when, therefore, there is any disturbance in the south part of the kingdom, this pass is always occupied to reduce Gondar to famine.

The village itself belongs to the office of Betwudet, and, since that office has been discontinued, it makes part of the revenue of the Ras. The language here is Falasha, though only used now by the Jews,

* Ber means a pass, in Amharic. Dingleber, the pass of the Virgin Mary.

who go by that name: it was anciently the language of all the province of Dembea, which has here its southern boundary. The air of Dingleber is excellent, and the prospect one of the most beautiful in Abyssinia; on the one side you have a distinct view of the lake Tzana, and all its islands; on the north, the peninsula of Gorgora, the former residence of the Jesuits, where too are the ruins of the king's palace. On the south of the lake you have a distant prospect of Dara, and of the Nile crossing that lake, preserving distinctly the tract of its stream unmixed with the rest of the water, and issuing out to form what is called the second cataract, at Alata, all places fixed in our mind by the memory of former distresses. On the south-east, we have a distant view of the flat country of Maitsha, for the most part covered with thick trees, and black like a forest; farther on the territory of Sacala, one of the districts of the Agows, near which are the fountains of the Nile, the object of all my wishes; and, close behind this, the high mountains of Amid-amid, which surrounded them in two semicircles like a new moon, or amphitheatre, and seem, by their shape, to deserve the name of mountains of the moon, such as was given by antiquity to mountains, in the neighbourhood of which the Nile was supposed to rise.

At Dingleber I overtook my servants, who were disposed to stop there for that night. They had been very much oppressed by troops of wild Galla, who, never having seen white men, could not refrain indulging a troublesome curiosity, without, indeed, doing any harm, or shewing any signs of insolence; this, however, did not hinder my servants from being terrified, as neither I nor any protector was near them. I resolved to avoid the like inconvenience, by proceeding further, as I knew the next day the main body

of these savages would be up with us at Dingleber; and I rather wished to be at the point where our two roads separated, than pass a whole day in such company It is true, I was under no sort of apprehension; for I perceived Fasil's horse, driven before us, commanded all necessary respect, and Zor Woldo had no occasion to exert himself at all.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we left Dingleber, and at seven passed a great river; at eight in the evening we crossed two inconsiderable streams, and came to a collection of small villages, called Degwassa: here we entered into some narrow defiles between mountains, covered to the very top with herbage and brushwood; it was a delightful night, and we were resolved to make the most of it. On every side of us we heard Guinea fowls, of which the woods here are full. At half past nine we halted a little, just leaving the narrow passes, and entering upon the plain. The district is called Sankraber. I found myself exceedingly fatigued, and slept a good half hour upon the ground.

At half past ten we began our journey anew, passing immediately the small village of Wainadega *, famous for the decisive battle fought between King Claudius and the Moor Gragne, where the latter was slain, and an end, for a time, put to the most disastrous war that ever Abyssinia was engaged in. At half after eleven we passed Guanguera on our left hand: it is a collection of many villages, at about ten miles distance: and at mid-night we had Degwassa on our right, and Guanguera on our left. At half past twelve we again rested at the side of a small river, of which I know not the name. We were now in the flat country of

* Otherwise called Graneber.

Maitsha, descending very gently southward. At three quarters past one, in the morning of the first of November, I alighted at two small villages, whose huts were but just finished, about 500 yards from the two trees that were in the front of our army, when, after passing the Nile at that dangerous ford near the Jemma, we offered Fasil battle at Limjour, which was the place we were now again come to, but in better health and spirits than before.

Shalaka Woldo, upon my observing to him, that I was happy to see the people again raising their houses which Michael had destroyed, said, with a barbarous kind of smile, "Aye, and so am I too; for if those two villages had not been built, we should have had no fire-wood at Kelti to-night:" by which he meant, that the Galla, who were behind him, and whose next station was the banks of the river Kelti, would pull down all the new-built houses, in order to carry fire-wood along with them; and, indeed, we saw traces of some houses which had been newly built, and still as newly destroyed; the wood of which, partly kindled, and partly lying on the ground, served us for our fire that night at Kelti. I found myself exceedingly indisposed, and could scarcely force on a couple of hours further, when we came to the banks of the river Kelti, at a quarter after six in the morning.

The Kelti here is a large river; at the ford it was four feet deep, though now the dry season: It is here called the Kelti Branti, because some miles higher up it is joined by a considerable river called the Branti, which rises to the westward in the high lands of the Agows of Quaquera, and both these streams, when united, fall into the Nile a little below. The banks of this river are exceedingly steep and dangerous, the earth loose, falling in great lumps down into the stream; it is a red bole of a soapy quality; the bot-

tom, too, and the ascent on the other side, are soft; the water, though troubled and muddy, is sweet and well-tasted. We saw lights and fires on the opposite bank, and had begun to unloose the tent, when we received a message by two Galla on foot, armed with lances and shields, that we should not encamp there, as our horses and mules would probably be stolen, but desiring us to pass the river forthwith, and pitch our tent among them.

I asked Shalaka Woldo who these were? He said, they were an advanced post of Welleta Yasous, who had taken up that ground for the head-quarters to-morrow; that they were all Galla, under a famous partisan, a robber, called the Jumper; and, by the bye, he added, speaking softly in my ear, that there was not a greater thief or murderer in all the country of the Galla. I paid him my compliments upon the judicious choice he had made of a companion and a protector for us: To which he answered, laughing, "The better, the better; you shall see how it is the better." As it was necessary to load the mules again, the tent and baggage having been taken off before we could pass the river, we all set to work with very ill-will, being excessively fatigued with a long journey and want of sleep. No sooner had Shalaka Woldo perceived this, than by two whistles upon his fingers, and a yell, he brought above fifty people to our assistance; the baggage was passed in one moment, and in another my two tents were pitched; which is a work these people are very dexterous at, and well acquainted with.

As soon as we had encamped, we found, that the reason we were not left alone on the other side of the river was, that those of the Galla who returned, pulled down all the villages for fire-wood, and plundered the houses, though they were Galla like themselves,

and of Fasil's party; and these again, driven from their houses, robbed of all they had, except their lance and shield, followed the stragglers, and wreaked their vengeance upon those whom they could surprise, or were not too numerous for them.

I was scarcely laid down to sleep, when a servant, and with him Zor Woldo, were sent to me from the Jumper: they brought us a bull of an enormous size, but not very fat; though we were all pretty keen in point of appetite, the stock of provision sent us seemed to defy our utmost endeavours, but we were sure of assistance enough; so the bull was immediately killed and skinned. In the mean time, I took a short, but very refreshing sleep, being resolved to resume my journey with the same diligence, till we had got to the point where we might separate from the army, which is at a place called Roo, where a large market is kept by the Agows, in whose country it is, and resorted to by all the neighbouring inhabitants.

About ten o'clock I waited upon our commander in chief, the Jumper; he seemed very much embarrassed at the visit, was quite naked, having only a towel about his loins, and had been washing himself in the Kelti, to very little purpose, as I thought, for he was then rubbing his arms and body over with melted tallow; his hair had been abundantly anointed before, and a man was then finishing his head-dress, by plaiting it with some of the long and small guts of an ox, which I did not perceive had ever been cleaned; and he had already put about his neck two rounds of the same, in the manner of a necklace, or rather a solitaire, one end of them hanging down to the pit of his stomach. Our conversation was neither long nor interesting; I was overcome with the disagreeable smell of blood and carrion. He did not understand one word of Amharic, Geez, or any other language but

Galla; he asked no questions, and shewed no sort of curiosity. Woldo, on the other hand, informed himself from him of every thing he wanted to know.

This Jumper was tall and lean, very sharp faced, with a long nose, small eyes, and prodigious large ears; he never looked you in the face, but was rolling his eyes constantly round and round, and never fixing them upon any thing: he resembled very much a lean keen greyhound; there was no sternness nor command in his countenance, but a certain look that seemed to express a vacancy of mind, like that of an idiot. With this, he was allowed, on all hands, to be the most cruel, merciless murderer and spoiler, of all the Galla. He was very active on horseback, and very indifferent about food or sleep. I made him a small present, which he took with great indifference; only told Woldo, that if I meant it to pay for the bull he had sent me, it was needless, for it was given me by Fasil's order, and cost him nothing.

There we learned, that on our way we should meet a party of about 200 men, who had been sent by Fasil to take possession of a post before we came to Roo, lest having intelligence of us, some of the Maitsha people, whose houses had been destroyed, might follow us when we were parted from the army. The Jumper told us that his brother had the command of that party, that they were all Galla of Fasil's own nation, under his brother, who was called the Lamb, and who was just such a murderer and robber as himself. I was just rising to go out of his tent, when Zor Woldo, who was sitting behind me, informed me, there were news from Gondar. I asked him how he knew that? He said, he heard the people say so from without. A sudden trepidation now seized me, as I was afraid of some new trick or obstacle, which might impede the journey, the accomplishment of which I so much longed for.

Upon going towards my tent I was met by Strates, and another Greek, with a servant of Ozoro Esther, with whom I was well acquainted: they had left Fasil at Bamba, whose wild Galla were not all yet dismissed, and he himself seemed not determined whether he should go to Gondar or not. They told me that all was in confusion at Gondar; that Gusho of Amhara, and Powussen of Begemder, had been there, and brought some trifle of money, for a mere pretence, to that wretch Socinios, whom the Iteghe unadvisedly had consented to make king; having called Fasil, Gusho, and Powussen together, to reconcile them, that, united, they might attack Michael. The queen herself had been reconciled to Socinios, who led the life of a drunkard, a ruffian, and a profligate; but her chief fears were that Michael should return, the probability of which increased daily.

As for Fasil, he had hitherto answered the queen's invitation to Gondar evasively, sometimes by complaining that Gusho and Powussen had come to Gondar before him, and that Gusho was made Ras; at other times sending peremptorily to them to leave Gondar, and return to their provinces, or he would burn the town about their ears: and the last message, the day before they left the capital was, that he was then on his march towards Gondar, and consented to Gusho and Powussen's staying; but as these two chiefs had great reason to suspect that he was in correspondence with the king and Ras Michael in Tigre, as it was known to them that he had fomented disturbances both in Begemder and Amhara, they had gone with Socinios to Koscam, without drums beating, or any sort of parade whatever, and, after taking leave, had the next day set out to their respective provinces. Upon another message from Fasil, they had agreed to return to Gondar, and leave their army at Limras;

but their troops, finding themselves so near, had disbanded, and returned to their homes, leaving Gusho and Powussen attended only by their household servants. who, finding themselves in danger, and that Fasil was actually advancing secretly, left Gondar and separated.

Ozoro Esther's servant (Guebra Mariam) likewise told me, that Michael, as he believed, waited for nothing but some arrangement with Fasil, for that he had no enemy remaining on the east of the Tacazze; that his intention was to return by the way of Lasta, not willing to risk the many difficult passages in Woggora, a country full of hardy troops, inveterate enemies to the Jan, and where Ayto Tesfos of Samen had occupied all the defiles, and was resolved to dispute every post with him. It was well known, however, that the passes through the mountains of Lasta, were more dangerous and difficult than those of Woggora and Amhamion; in a word, Guigarr, chief of the clan of Lasta (called Waag) possessed a strong-hold * in those mountains, where many an Abyssinian army had perished, and where it was absolutely impossible to proceed but with the consent and connivance of that clan, or tribe; and though this Guigarr had been Michael's enemy ever since the war of Mariam Barea, peace was now concluded between them, the Ras having set Guigarr's brother at liberty, who had been some time a prisoner, and was taken in an incursion which the people of Waag had made into Tigre.

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* This was the pass of Tchetcheco, celebrated in the annals as the place where Susneus, Theclidas, Hannes, and Bacuri, had all lost a number of troops. The name of Guigarr seems to have been hereditary in Lasta. Michael made one of this name be executed, while he was engaged in the war against Mariam Barea, in 1768.—E.

Excepting this pass in the mountains of Lasta, all the ground was even from thence to Tigre; the territory of Gouliou, indeed, through which the army was to march for four days, was very ill-provided with water; it was inhabited by Galla, whom Michael had suffered to settle there, to be as a barrier between Tigre, Lasta, and Begemder; but this clan was perfectly at his command, so all was easy and secure if Guigarr only remained faithful.

After giving time to Guebra Mariam to refresh himself, I took him along into the tent to hear Ozoro Esther's message: she had been ailing after my leaving Gondar, had had a slow fever, which very much affected her nerves, and was now alarmed at a symptom which was but the effect of weakness, starting or involuntary contraction of her legs and arms, or a kind of convulsion which frequently awakened her out of her sleep. This she thought was a sure forerunner of death; and adjured me, by every claim of friendship that she had upon me, to return ere it would be too late. She, moreover, pledged herself that her nephew, Aylo of Gojam, should immediately carry me to the head of the Nile the moment she was recovered. Upon closer interrogation, I found that, being abandoned, as it were, entirely to Fasil's discretion, by the retreat of Gusho and Powussen, her friends, and the absence of her husband Ras Michael, she dreaded falling into the hands of Fasil, who, she well knew, was acquainted how active she had been in instigating Michael to avenge the blood of her late husband Mariam Barea, by the effusion of that of every Galla unfortunate enough to fall into his hands. Besides, the part her mother, the Iteghe, had acted, in setting that wretch Socinios upon the throne, gave her the very best-founded apprehensions that Michael's resentment would have no bounds; and he had declared

so by frequent messages, (the last a very brutal one) that he would hang Socinios, and her mother the Iteghe, with their heads downmost, upon the same tree, before the king's house, the very day that he entered Gondar. It was well known, besides, to his wife Ozoro Esther, and to the whole kingdom, that his performance upon these occasions never fell short of his threatenings. From all this, and a great sensibility of mind, Ozoro Esther, worn out by her late sickness, and by want of sleep, exercise, and nourishment, had fallen into a very dangerous situation, and of a very difficult cure, even though the cause was perfectly known.

I shall not trouble the reader with what passed in my mind at this juncture. I do believe, the pursuit I was then engaged in was the only one which I would not have instantly abandoned upon such a summons. Besides the sincere attachment I had myself to her, as one of the most lovely and amiable women in the world, she was the mother of my most intimate friend Ayto Confu, and the wife of Ras Michael, over whom she had every day more and more influence; and I had long suspected that the young king, my constant benefactor, had contracted a decided tenderness for her. To have returned would have been nothing had the danger or trouble been much greater; but it was obviously impossible another opportunity should offer: the country was now on the point of being plunged into a degree of disorder greater than that which had occasioned the retreat of the king to Tigre. I therefore resolved to run the risk of continuing for a time under the imputation of the foulest and basest of all sins, that of ingratitude to my benefactors; and I am confident, had it been the will of heaven that I had died in that journey, the consideration of my lying with apparent reason under that im-

putation would have been one of the most bitter reflections of my last moments. Having, therefore, taken my resolution, I acquainted Guebra Mariam that an immediate return was absolutely impossible; but that I should endeavour, with the utmost of my power, to make a speedy one; in the mean time, I sent word to the Greek priest (who was a sort of physician), how he was to proceed in the interim, during my absence.

We had now left Maitsha by crossing the river Kelti. I shall only add, to what I have already said, that it was a very fruitful country, but so flat that the water with difficulty runs off after the tropical rains, and this occasions its being for several months unhealthy. Several tribes of Galla, from the south of the Nile, were settled here by Yasous the Great, and his son David, as a defence for the rich countries of the Agows, Damot, Gojam, and Dembea, against the desolations and inroads of the wild Galla their countrymen, from whom they had revolted; they consist of ninety-nine families; and it is a common saying among them, that the devil holds the hundredth part for his own family, as there is nowhere else to be found a family of men equal to any of the ninety-nine. It has been sometimes connected with Gojam, oftener with Damot and the Agows, who were at this time under the government of Fasil.

The houses in Maitsha are of a very singular construction: the first proprietor has a field, which he divides into three or four, as he pleases, (suppose four) by two hedges, made of the thorny branches of the acacia-tree. In the corner, or intersection of the two hedges, he begins his low hut, and occupies as much of the angle as he pleases. Three other brothers, perhaps, occupy each of the three

other angles; behind these their children place their house, and inclose the end of their father's by another, which they make generally shorter than the first, because broader. After they have raised as many houses as they please, they surround the whole with a thick and almost impenetrable abbatis, or thorny hedge, and all the family are under one roof, ready to assist each other on the first alarm; for they have nothing to do but every man to look out at his own door, and they are close in a body together, facing every point that danger can possibly come from. They are, however, speedily destroyed by a stronger enemy, as we easily found; for we had only to set the dry hedge, and the canes that grew round it, on fire, and it communicated at once to the houses, chiefly consisting of dry straw. Such is their terror of the small-pox, which comes here seldom more frequently than once in fifteen or twenty years, that when one of these houses is tainted with the disease, their neighbours, who know it will infect the whole colony, surround it in the night, and set fire to it, which is consumed in a minute, whilst the unfortunate people belonging to it (who would endeavour to escape) are unmercifully thrust back, with lances and forks, into the flames, by the hands of their own neighbours and relations, without an instance of one ever being suffered to survive. This to us will appear a barbarity scarcely credible: it would be quite otherwise if we saw the situation of the country under that dreadful visitation of the small-pox; the plague has nothing in it so terrible*.

* The small pox, said to be originally an African disease, is the most dreadful calamity that visits Abyssinia. Negroes and many of the natives who approach their constitution, whose skins are

The river Kelti has excellent fish, though the Abyssinians care not for food of this kind. The better sort of people eat some species in the time of Lent; but the generality of the common are deterred by passages of scripture, and distinctions in the Mosaic law, concerning such animals as are clean and unclean, ill understood; they are, besides, exceedingly lazy, and know nothing of nets; neither have they the ingenuity we see in other savages, of making hooks or lines: in all the time I staid, I never saw one Abyssinian fisher engaged in the employment in any river or lake.

At Kelti begins the territory of Aroossi: it is in fact the southmost division of Maitsha, on the west side of the Nile: it is not inhabited, however, by Galla, but by Abyssinians, a kindred of the Agows. When therefore we passed the river Kelti, we entered into the territory of Aroossi, bounded on the north by that river, as it is on the south by the Assar, the Aroosi running through the midst of that district.

My anxiety to lose no time in this journey had determined me to set out this afternoon. I had for this purpose dispatched Ozoro Esther's servant, but when we began to strike our tents, we were told neither beast nor man was capable of going farther that day. In a word, the forced march that we had made of 29 miles without rest, and with but little food, had quite jaded our mules; our men, too, who carried the quadrant, declared, that without a night's rest, they could proceed no further. We were then obliged to make a virtue of necessity, and to confess that, since

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soft and moist, and who have the other properties of the diathesis, commonly found within the tropical rains, seem to suffer more from this distemper than the meagre inhabitants of the desert.—E.

we could go no farther, we were in the most convenient halting-place possible, having plenty of both food and water; and as to protection, we had every reason to be satisfied that we were masters of the country in which we were encamped. It was generally agreed, therefore, to relax that day. I set aside an hour to put these memoirs in order, and then joined our servants, who, on such occasions, are always our companions, and who had provided a small horn full of spirits, and a jar full of beer, or bouza, by offering some trifling present to our commandant the Jumper, who was much more tenacious of his drink than his meat. We swam and dabbled with great delight in the Kelti, where are neither crocodiles nor gomari (hippopotamus); slept a little afterwards, and retired into the tent to a supper, which would have been a cheerful one, could I have forgot that Ozoro Esther was suffering.

We now began to discuss the motive that had induced our friend Strates again to tempt the danger of the ways. This singular fellow, as we learned from Guebra Mariam, as well as from his own confession, repented of his resolution as soon as we were gone, and had determined on foot to follow us, when he heard of this opportunity of Ozoro Esther's servant being sent on a message, and that princess was so well pleased with his anxiety, that she gave him a mule, that he might not retard her servant.

This Greek had known Fasil intimately, both when he was a private man in Kasmati Eshte's time, and afterwards, when he was governor of Damot; for he was a servant in the palace when Joas was king, as all the Greeks were; had a company of fusileers, and one or two other small appointments, all of which were taken from him, and from most of the other Greeks, upon the death of the dwarf, who, I before

mentioned, was shot on the side of Ras Michael by an unknown hand upon his first arrival at Gondar. He now lived upon the charity of the queen-mother, and what he picked up by his buffoonery among the great men at court. We found that in Shalaka Woldo we had got a man of more understanding than our friend Strates, but much about his equal in mimickry and buffoonery.

CHAP. XI.

Continue our Journey—Fall in with a party of Galla—Prove our Friends—Pass the Nile—Arrive at Goutto, and visit the first Cataract.

On the second of November, at seven in the morning, we pursued our journey in a direction southward, and passed the church of Boskon Abbo; ever memorable to us as being the station of Fasil in May, when he intended to cut us off after our passage of the Nile. This brought on a conversation with our guide Woldo, who had been present with Fasil at his camp behind this church, and afterwards, when Michael offered him battle at Limjour, he was there attending his master. He said, that the army of Welleta Yasous was above 12,000 strong; that they were intending to attack the king at the ford, and had no doubt of doing it successfully, as they imagined the King and Ras Michael, with part of both horse and foot, would pass early, but the rest with difficulty and danger. It was at that instant Welleta Yasous was to fall upon those that remained with Kella Yasous, on the other side of the Nile, in that confusion in which they necessarily must be. Fasil then, with above 3000 horse, and a large body of foot, was ready to inclose both Ras Michael

and the King, and to have taken them prisoners. Nothing could have fallen out more exactly, as it was planned, than this did; the king's black horse, and the other horse of his household, had taken possession of the ford, till the King, the Ras, and the greatest part of the Tigre musqueteers, under Guebra Mascal, had passed.

On the other hand, Kefla Yasous, who had the charge of the rear, and the passing the mules, tents, and baggage, finding so many stragglers constantly coming in, had determined to wait on that side till day-light. This was the moment that would have decided the fate of our army; all was fatigue and despondency; but Welleta Yasous having lingered with the army of execution, and in the meantime the priests having been examined, and the spies detected, the moment Kefla Yasous began his march to Delakus, the favourable instant was lost to Fasil, and all that followed was extremely dangerous to him; for, before Welleta Yasous arrived, Kefla Yasous had passed the Nile, and was strongly posted with his musquetry, so that Welleta Yasous durst not approach him, and this gave Kefla Yasous an opportunity of detaching the best or freshest of his troops to reinforce Michael, whom Fasil found already an overmatch for him at Limjour, when he was forced to retreat before the king, who very willingly offered him battle. Add to this, that Welleta Yasous was not acquainted how near this junction of Kefla Yasous with Ras Michael might be, nor where Fasil was, or whether or not he had been beaten. Woldo pretended to know nothing of the spy whom we had left hanging on the tree at the ford when Kefla Yasous marched; but he laid all the blame upon the priests, of whose information he was perfectly instructed.

At three quarters after ten in the morning we passed the small river Aroosi, which either gives its name to, or receives it from, the district through which it passes. It falls into the Nile about four miles below; is a clear, small, brisk stream; its banks covered with verdure not to be described. At half an hour before noon we came to Roo; it is a level space, shaded round with trees, in a small plain, where the neighbouring people of Goutto, Agow, and Maitsha, hold a market for hides, honey, butter, and all kinds of cattle. Gold, too, is brought by the Agows from the neighouring Shangalla; all the markets in Abyssinia are held in such places as this, in the open fields, and under the shade of trees: every body, while he is there, is safe under the protection of the government where that market is kept, and no feuds or private animosities must be resented there; but they that have enemies must take care of themselves in coming and going, for then they are at their own risk.

In the dry bed of a river, at the foot of a small wood, before you ascend the market-place at Roo, we found the Lamb, our friend the Jumper's brother, concealed very much like a thief in a hole, where we might easily have passed him unnoticed. We gave him some tobacco, of which he was very fond, and a few trifles. We asked him what questions we pleased about the roads, which he answered plainly, shortly, and discreetly; he assured us no Maitsha people had passed, not even to the market, and this we found afterwards was strictly true; for such as had intelligence that he and his party were on that road, did not venture from home with their goods; so that the day before, which had been that of the market, no one chose to run the risk of attending it.

Woldo was very eloquent in praise of this officer, the Lamb. He said he had a great deal more huma-

nity than his brother, and when he made an inroad into Gojam, or any part of Abyssinia, he never murdered any women, not even those that were with child; a contrary custom, it seems prevailing among all the Galla. I congratulated him upon this great instance of his humanity, which he took very gravely, as if really intended. He told me that it was he that attacked Michael's horse at Limjour; and added, that, had it been any other, Ayto Welleta Michael's life would not have been spared when he was taken prisoner. That want of curiosity, inattention, and absolute indifference for new objects, which was remarkable in the Jumper, was very plainly discernible in this chieftain likewise, and seems to be a characteristic of the nation

I asked Woldo what became of those forty-four Galla who had their eyes pulled out, after the battle of Fagitta, by Michael, on his return to Gondar. "Not one of them," said he, "ever came into his own country. It was reported the hyæna ate them upon the Angrab, where they were turned out to starve." "I saved three of them," said I. "Yes," answered he, "and others might have been saved too:" and then added, in a low voice, "the hyænas eating them at the Angrab, was a story contrived for the Galla; but we, that are Fasil's servants, know they were made away with by his order in Maitsha and the Agow country, that none of them might be seen in their own provinces to terrify the rest of their clans by the mangled appearance they then bore; for this was Ras Michael's intention in disfiguring them, and yet leaving them alive. To prevent, therefore, the success of this scheme, Fasil put them to death in their way, before they reached their own country." I confess I was struck at this finesse, which completed Waragna Fasil's character in my mind. "What," said I, "kill

his own people taken prisoners whilst fighting for him, merely because their enemies had cruelly deprived them of their sight! indeed, Woldo, that is not credible." "O ho," says he, "but it is true; your Galla are not like other men, they do not talk about what is cruel and what is not; they do just what is for their own good, what is reasonable, and think no more of the matter. Ras Michael," says he, "would make an excellent Galla; and do not you believe that he would do any cruel action which my master Fasil would not perpetrate on the same provocation, and to answer the same purpose?"

It now occurred to me why the three Galla, whom I had maintained at Gondar, had constantly refused to return into their own country with the many safe opportunities which at times had been presented to them, especially since the king's retreat to Tigre. Neither had I observed any desire in Fasil's servants, who occasionally came to Gondar, of helping to restore these unfortunate men to their country, because they knew the fate that awaited them.

Although the Lamb, and the other Galla, his soldiers, paid very little attention, as I have said, to us, it was remarkable to see the respect they shewed Fasil's horse. The greatest part of them, one by one, gave him handfuls of barley, and the Lamb himself had a long and serious conversation with him. Woldo told me it was all spent in regretting the horse's ill-fortune, and Fasil's cruelty, in having bestowed him upon a white man, who would not feed him, nor ever let him return to Bizamo. Bizamo is a country of Galla south of the Nile, after it makes its southmost turn, and has surrounded the kingdom of Gojam. I was better pleased with this genuine mark of kindness to the horse, than with all the proofs of humanity Woldo had attributed to his chieftain in not frequent-

ly putting to death pregnant women. When I remarked this, "Bad men! bad men! all of them!" says Woldo; "but your Ras Michael will be among them one of these days, and pull all their eyes out again; and so much the better."

At Roo we left the direct road which leads to Bure, the residence of the governor of Damot, towards which place the route of the army was directed; so I took leave, as I hoped, for ever, of my brethren the Galla, but still continued to drive the horse before me. We turned our face now directly upon the fountains of the Nile, which lay S. E. by S. according to the compass. At a quarter before noon we saw the high sharp pointed mountain of Temhua, standing single, in the form of a cone, at about 18 miles distance, and behind this the mountain of Banja, the place where Fasil almost exterminated the Agows in a battle soon after his return to Bure, and to revenge which, the king's last fatal campaign was undertaken in Maitsha, terminated by his retreat to Tigre.

Here Strates, whilst amusing himself in the wood in search of new birds and beasts for our collection of natural history, fired his gun at one of the former, distinguished by the beauty and variety of its plumage. I stopt to make a rough sketch of it, which might be finished at more leisure: this was scarcely done, and we again moving forward on our journey, when we heard a confusion of shrill, barbarous cries, and presently saw a number of horsemen pouring down upon us, with their lances lifted up, in a posture ready to attack us immediately. The ground was woody and uneven, so they could not make the speed they seemed to desire, and we had just time to put ourselves upon our defence with our firelocks, muskets, and blunderbusses in our hands, behind our baggage. Woldo ran several paces towards them, knowing them

by the cry to be friends, even before he had seen them, which was, "Fasil ali, Fasil ali—*there is none but Fasil that commands here.*" Upon seeing us without any marks of discomposure, they all stopt with Woldo, and by him we learned, that this was the party we had passed commanded by the Lamb, who, after we had left him, had heard that five Agow horsemen had passed between the army and his party, and from the shot, he had feared that they might have attempted something against us, and he had thereupon come to our assistance with all the speed possible.

Thus did we see that this man, who, according to our ideas, seemed in understanding inferior to most of the brute creation, had yet, in executing his orders, a discernment, punctuality, activity, and sense of duty, equal to any Christian officer who could have had a like commission. He now appeared to us in a quite different light than when we first had met him; and his inattention when we were with him, was the more agreeable, as it left us at our entire liberty, without teazing or molesting us, when he could be of no real service, as every Amharic soldier would have done. On the other hand, his alacrity and resolution, in the moment he thought us in danger, exhibited him to our view, as having on both occasions just the qualities we could have desired. We now, therefore, shewed him the utmost civility, spread a table-cloth on the ground, by the brook, mixed our honey and liquid butter together in a plate, and laid plenty of teff bread beside it. We invited the Lamb to sit down and breakfast with us, which he did, each of us dipping our hand with pieces of bread alternately into the dish which contained the honey; but Strates, whose heart was open, for he felt very gratefully the Lamb's attention to save him from being murdered by the Agows, pulled out a large piece of raw beef, part of the bul-

lock we killed at Kelti, which he had perfectly cleared from all incumbrance of bones; this he gave to the Lamb, desiring him to divide it among his men, which he did, keeping a very small proportion to himself, and which he ate before us. Drink we had none, but the water of the brook than ran by, for my people had finished all our other liquors at the Kelti, after I was in bed, when they were taking their leave of Guebra Mariam, Ozoro Esther's servant.

It was now time to pursue our journey; and, to shew our gratitude for the real service this Lamb intended to have rendered us, I gave him four times the quantity of tobacco he had got before, and so in proportion of every other trifle. All these he took with absolute indifference, as formerly, much as if it had been all his own: he expressed no sort of thanks, either in his words or in his countenance; only while at breakfast said, that he was very much grieved that it had been but a false alarm, for he heartily desired that some robbers really had attacked us, that he might have shewn us how quickly and dexterously he would have cut them to pieces, though there had been a hundred of them. I mentioned to Woldo my obligations to the Lamb for his good wishes, but that things were quite as well as they were; that I had no sort of curiosity for such exhibitions, which I did not however doubt he would have performed most dexterously.

We were now taking leave to proceed on our journey, and my servant folding up the table cloth, when the Lamb desired to speak to Woldo, and for the first time ventured to make a request, which was a very extraordinary one; he begged that I would give him the table cloth to cover his head, and keep his face from the sun. I could not help laughing within myself at the idea of preserving that beautiful complex-

ion from sun-burning; but I gave him the cloth very readily, which he accordingly spread upon his head, till it covered half his face; he then got upon his horse, and rode quietly away. Before he went, he detached fifteen men, Woldo said he did not know where, but by what he had gathered, and the route they had taken, he was sure that detachment was meant for our service, and to protect us on the right of our route, not having yet sufficiently quieted his own mind about the five Agows that passed between the army and his post, the night we were at Kelti. These, however, being poorly mounted and armed, would not have found their account in meddling with us, though we had no wishes to show our dexterity in destroying them, as our friend the Lamb was so desirous of doing; and we afterwards discovered they were not quite so despicable as they were represented, nor were they Agows. All this passed in much less time than it is told. We were on horseback again in little more than half an hour; our friends were, like us, willing to meet and willing to part, only I ordered Strates to suspend his firing for that day, lest it should procure us another interview, which we by no means courted.

We had halted by the side of a small river which falls into the Assar; and a little before one o'clock we came to the Assar itself. The Assar, as I have already said, is the southern boundary of Aroosi, as Kelti is the northern; and as Aroosi is the southern district of Maitsha, on the west side of the Nile, it follows that the Assar is the southern boundary of Maitsha.

On the other side of this river begins the province of Goutto, which, according to the ancient rules of government, before Ras Michael destroyed all distinctions, depended upon the province of Damot; where-

as Maitsha belonged to the office of Betwudet, since Fasil had appropriated both to himself by force, as well as the whole country of the Agows, which he had possessed by the same title ever since the battle of Banja. The inhabitants of Goutto are the ancient natives of that country; they are not Galla, as those of Maitsha, but much more civilized, and better governed. The language of the Agow and the Amharic are the two chiefly spoken in Goutto, though there are distant places towards the Jemma, on the side of the Nile, where they speak that of the Falasha likewise. The people in Goutto are richer and better lodged than those of the neighbouring Maitsha; their whole country is full of cattle of the largest size, exceedingly beautiful, and of all the different colours; there are some places, likewise, where their honey is excellent, equal to any in the country of the Agows; but the greatest quantity of it is of low price and of little esteem, owing to the lupine flowers on which the bees feed, and of which a great quantity covers the whole face of the country. This gives a bitterness to the greatest part of the honey, and occasions, as they believe, vertigoes or dizzinesses, to those that eat it; the same would happen with the Agows, did they not take care to eradicate the lupines throughout their whole country.

All this little territory of Aroossi is by much the most pleasant that we had seen in Abyssinia; perhaps it is equal to any thing the east can produce. The whole is finely shaded with acacia trees, I mean the acacia vera, or the Egyptian thorn, the tree which, in the sultry parts of Africa, produces the gum-arabic. These trees grow seldom above fifteen or sixteen feet high, then flatten and spread wide at the top, and touch each other, while the trunks are far asunder, and under a vertical sun, leave you, many miles toge-

ther, a free space to walk in a cool delicious shade. There is scarce any tree but this in Maitsha. All Guanguera and Wainadega are full of them; but in these last-mentioned places, near the capital, where the country grows narrower, being confined between the lake and the mountains, these trees are more in the way of the march of armies, and are thinner, as being constantly cut down for fuel, and never replanted, or suffered to replace themselves, which they otherwise would do, and cover the whole face of the country, as once apparently they did. The ground below those trees, all throughout Aroosi, is thick covered with lupines, almost to the exclusion of every other flower. Wild oats also grow up here spontaneously, to a prodigious height and size, capable often of concealing both the horse and his rider, and some of the stalks being little less than an inch in circumference. They have, when ripe, the appearance of small canes. The inhabitants make no sort of use of this grain, in any period of its growth; the uppermost thin husk of it is beautifully variegated with a changeable colour; the taste is perfectly good. I often made the meal into cakes, in remembrance of Scotland.

The Abyssinians never could relish these cakes, which they said were bitter, and burnt their stomachs, as also made them thirsty. I do, however, believe this is the oat in its original state, and that it is degenerated everywhere with us. The soil of this country is a fine black mould, in appearance like to that which composes our gardens. The oat seems to delight in a moist, watery soil; and, as no underwood grows under the shadow of the trees, the plough passes without interruption. As there is likewise no iron in their plough (it being all composed of wood), the furrow is a very slight one, nor does the plough reach deep enough to be entangled with the roots of trees. It is

the north part of Maitsha, however, that is chiefly in culture; south of the Kelti all is pasture; a large number of horses is bred here yearly, for it is the custom among the Galla to be all horsemen or graziers.

All Aroosi is finely watered with small streams, though the Assar is the largest river we had seen, except the Nile. It was about 170 yards broad, and two feet deep, running over a bed of large stones; though generally through a flat and level country, it is very rapid, and after much rain scarcely passable, owing to the height of its source in the mountains of the Agows; its course, where we forded it, is from south to north, but it soon turns to the north-east, and, after flowing five or six miles, joins the Nile, and loses itself in that river.

Immediately below this ford of the Assar is a magnificent cascade, or cataract. I computed the perpendicular height of the fall to be above 20 feet, and the breadth of the stream to be something more than 80; but it is so closely covered with trees or bushes, and the ground so uneven, that it needs great perseverance and attention to approach it nearly with safety; the stream covers the rock without leaving any part of it visible, and the whole river falls uninterrupted down with an incredible violence and noise, without being anyway broken or divided; below this cataract it becomes considerably narrower, and, as we have said, in this state runs on to join the Nile.

The strength of vegetation which the moisture of this river produces, supported by the action of a very warm sun, is such as one might naturally expect from theory, though we cannot help being surprised at the effects when we see them before us, trees and shrubs covered with flowers of every colour, all new and extraordinary in their shapes, crowded with birds of

many uncouth forms, all of them richly adorned with variety of plumage, and seeming to fix their residence upon the banks of this river, without a desire of wandering to any distance in the neighbouring fields: But as there is nothing, though ever so beautiful, that has not some defect or imperfection, among all these feathered beauties there is not one songster; and, unless of the rose or jessamin kind, none of their flowers have any smell; we hear indeed many squalling noisy birds of the jay kind, and we find two varieties of wild roses, white and yellow, to which I may add jessamin (called Leham), which becomes a large tree; but all the rest of the birds, or flowers, may be considered as liable to the general observation, that the flowers are destitute of odour, and the birds of song.

After passing the Assar, and several villages belonging to Goutto, our course being south-east, we had, for the first time, a distinct view of the high mountain of Geesh, the long-wished-for end of our dangerous and troublesome journey. Under this mountain are the fountains of the Nile; it bore from us S. E. by S. about thirty miles, as near as we could conjecture, in a straight line, without counting the deviations or crookedness of the road.

Ever since we had passed the Assar we had been descending gently through very uneven ground, covered thick with trees, and torn up by the gullies and courses of torrents. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the second of November, we came to the banks of the Nile; the passage is very difficult and dangerous, the bottom being full of holes made by considerable springs, light sinking sand, and at very little distance, large rocky stones; the eastern side was muddy and full of pits, the ground of clay; the Nile here is about 260 feet broad, and very rapid; its depth about four feet in the middle of the river, and the sides not above

two. Its banks are of a very gentle, easy descent; the western side is chiefly ornamented with high trees of the salix or willow tribe, growing straight, without joints or knots, and bearing long pointed pods full of a kind of cotton. This tree is called, in their language, Ha; the use they have for it is to make charcoal for the composition of gunpowder; but on the eastern side, the banks, to a considerable distance from the river, are covered with black, dark, and thick groves, with craggy-pointed rocks, and overshaded with some old, tall timber-trees, going to decay with age; a very rude and awful face of nature, a cover from which our fancy suggested a lion should issue, or some animal or monster yet more savage and ferocious.

The veneration still paid in this country for the Nile, such as obtained in antiquity, extends to the territory of Goutto, and, I believe, a very little farther. The reason is, I apprehend, that to this, and no lower, the country has remained under its ancient inhabitants. Below, we know that Maitsha has been occupied, within these few ages, by Pagan Galla, transplanted here for political purposes. At Goutto, however, and in the provinces of the Agows, the genuine indigenæ have not emigrated, and with these the old superstition is more firmly rooted in their hearts than the more recent doctrines of Christianity. They crowded to us at the ford, and they were, after some struggle, of great use in passing us; but they protested immediately with much vehemence, against any man's riding across the stream, mounted either upon horse or mule. They, without any sort of ceremony, unloaded our mules, and laid our baggage upon the grass, insisting that we should take off our shoes, and making an appearance of stoning those who attempted to wash the dirt off their cloaks and trowsers in the

stream. My servants were by this provoked to return rudeness for rudeness, and Woldo gave them two or three significant threats, while I sat by exceedingly happy at having so unexpectedly found the remnants of veneration for that ancient deity still subsisting in such full vigour. They after this allowed us, as well as our horses and mules, to drink, and conducted me across the river, holding me on each side very attentively, for fear of the holes; but the want of shoes was very inconvenient, the pointed rocks and stones at the bottom giving me several deep cuts on the soles of my feet; after this the beasts were led all to the same side with myself, also* one servant was passed with the greatest care by these poor people. Woldo had tipt me the wink to cross as they desired me: except my single gun, all the fire-arms and servants remained with the baggage and Woldo; and now we soon saw what was his intention, and how well he understood that the country he was in belonged to Fasil, his master.

There were between twenty and thirty of the Agows, old and young, some of them armed with lances and shields, and all of them with knives. Woldo took his small stick in one hand, sat down upon a green hillock by the ford, with his lighted pipe in the other; he ranged my people behind him, leaving the baggage by itself, and began gravely to exhort the Agows to lose no time in carrying over our baggage upon their shoulders. This proposal was treated with a kind of ridicule by the foremost of the Agows, and they began plainly to insinuate, that he should first settle with them a price for their trouble. He continued, however, smoking his pipe in seeming lei-

* Luigi Balugani.—F.

sure, and much at his ease, and, putting on an air of great wisdom, in a tone of moderation, he appealed to them, whether they had not, of their own accord, insisted on our crossing the river on foot, had unloaded our baggage, and sent the mules to the other side without our consent. The poor people candidly declared, that they had done so, because none are permitted in any other manner to cross the Nile, but that they would likewise carry our baggage safely and willingly over for pay. This word was no sooner uttered, when, apparently in a most violent passion, he leapt up, laid by his pipe, took his stick, and ran into the midst of them, crying out, with violent execrations, "And who am I? and who am I, then? a girl, a woman, or a Pagan dog like yourselves? and who is Waragna Fasil? are you not his slaves? or to whom else do you belong, that you are to make me pay for the consequences of your devilish idolatries and superstitions? But you want payment, do ye? here is your payment:" He then tucked his clothes tight about his girdle, began leaping two or three feet high, and laying about him with his stick over their heads and faces, or wherever he could strike them.

After this, Woldo wrested a lance from a long awkward fellow that was next him, standing amazed, and levelled the point at him in a manner, that I thought to see the poor peasant fall dead in an instant. The fellow fled in a trice; so did they all to a man; and no wonder, for in my life I never saw any one play the furious devil so naturally. Upon the man's running off, he cried out to my people to give him a gun; which made these poor wretches run faster, and hide themselves among the bushes. Lucky, indeed, was it for Woldo, that my servants did not put him to the trial, by giving him the gun as he demanded, for he would not have ventured to fire it,

perhaps to have touched it, if it had been to have made him master of the province.

I, who sat a spectator on the other side, thought we were now in a fine scrape, the evening coming on at a time of the year when it is not light at six, my baggage and servants on one side of the river, myself and beasts on the other, crippled absolutely in the feet by the stones, and the river so full of pits and holes, that, had they been all laden on the other side and ready, no one could have been bold enough to lead a beast through without a guide. The difficulty was not imaginary, I had myself an instant before made proof of it; and all difficulties are relative, greater or less, as you have means in your hands to overcome them. I was clearly satisfied, that Woldo knew the country, and was provided with a remedy for all this; I conceived, that this pacific behaviour, while they were unloading the mules, and driving them across the river, as well as his fury afterwards, was part of some scheme, with which I was resolved in no shape to interfere; and nothing convinced me more of this, than his resolute demand of a gun, when no persuasion could make him stay within ten yards of one, if it was discharged, even though the muzzle was pointed a contrary direction. I sat still, therefore, to see the end; and it was with some surprise, that I observed him to take his pipe, stick, and my servants along with him, and cross the river to me, as if nothing had happened, leaving the baggage on the other side, without any guard whatsoever; he then desired us all to get on horseback, and drive the mules before us, which we did accordingly; and, I suppose, we had not advanced above a hundred yards, before we saw a greater number of people than formerly run down to where our baggage was lying, and, while one crossed

the river, to desire us to stay where we were, the rest brought the whole over in an instant.

This, however, did not satisfy our guide; he put on a sulky air, as if he had been grievously injured; he kept the mules where they were, and would not send one back to be loaded at the river side, alleging it was unlucky to turn back upon a journey; he made them again take the baggage upon their shoulders, and carry it to the very place where our mules had halted, and there lay it down. On this they all flocked about him, begging that he would not report them to his master, as fearing some fine, or heavy chastisement, would fall upon their villages. The guide looked very sulky, said but very little, and that all in praise of himself, of his known mildness and moderation; as an instance of which, he appealed (impudently enough) to his late behaviour towards them. "If such a one," says he, naming a man that they knew, "had been in my place, what a fine reckoning he would have made with you! why, your punishment would not have ended in seven years." They all acknowledged the truth of his observation, as well as his moderation, gave him great commendations, and I believe, some promises when he passed there on his return.

Here I thought our affair happily ended, to the satisfaction of all parties. I mounted my horse, and Woldo went to a large silk bag, or purse, which I had given him full of tobacco, and he had his match and pipe in his hand, just as if he was going to fill it before he set out; he then unloosed the bag, felt it on the outside, putting first his three fingers, then his whole hand, pinching and squeezing it both within and without; at last he broke out in a violent transport of rage, crying that his gold was gone, and that they had robbed him of it. I had not till this

spoken one word: I asked him what he meant by his gold. He said he had about two ounces (value about 5 l.) in his tobacco purse, and that some person had laid hold of them when the baggage lay on the other side of the water; that the Agows had done it, and that they must pay him for it. The despair and anguish that he had counterfeited, quickly appeared in true and genuine colours in the faces of all the poor Agows; for his part, he disdained to speak but in monosyllables—So, so, and very well, and no matter, you shall see—and shook his head. We now proceeded on our journey; but two of the eldest among the Agows followed him to our quarters at night, where they made their peace with Woldo, who, I doubt not, dealt with them according to his usual mildness, justice and moderation; a specimen of which we have already seen.

I confess, this complicated piece of [illegible]ery, so suddenly invented, and so sucessfully carried into execution, gave me, for the first time, serious reflections on my own situation, as we were, in fact, entirely in this man's hand. Ayto Aylo's servant, indeed, continued with me; but he was now out of his knowledge and influence, and, from many hints he had given, very desirous of returning home: he seemed to have no great opinion of Woldo, and, indeed, had been in low spirits, and disgusted with our journey, since he had seen the reception I first met with from Fasil at Bamba; but I had use for him till we should arrive at the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, which was in the middle of Maitsha, and in the way by which we were to return. I had therefore been very kind to him, allowing him to ride upon one of my mules all the way. I had given him some presents likewise, and promised him more; so that he continued with me, though not very willingly, observing every thing, but saying little;

however, to me it was plain that Woldo stood in awe of him, for fear, probably, of his master Fasil; for Aylo had over him a most absolute influence, and Guebra Ehud (Aylo's brother) had been present when Aylo's servant set out with us from Bamba, under charge of this Woldo.

To Woldo, too, I had been very attentive: I had anticipated what I saw were his wishes, by small presents, and more considerable promises. I had told him plainly at Bamba, in presence of Fasil's Fit-Auraris and Ayto Welleta Michael (Ras Michael's nephew), that I would reward him in their sight according to his behaviour; that I scarcely thanked him for his being barely faithful, for so he was accountable to his master, whose honour was pledged for my safety; but that I expected he would not attempt to impose upon me, nor suffer others to do so, nor terrify me unnecessarily upon the road, nor obstruct me in my pursuits, be sulky, or refuse to answer the inquiries that I made about the countries through which we were to pass. All this was promised, repromised, and repeatedly sworn to; and the Fit-Auraris had assured me, that he knew certainly this man would please me, and that Fasil was upon honour when he had chosen him to attend me, although he had then use for him in other business; and it is not less true, that, during the whole of our journey hitherto, he had behaved perfectly to the letter of his promise, and I had omitted no opportunity to gratify him by several anticipations of mine.

I had upon me a large beautiful red silk sash, which went six or seven times round, in which I carried my crooked knife and two pistols; he had often admired the beauty of it, inquired where it was made, and what it might have cost. I had answered often negligently and at random, and I had thought no more

of it, as his inquiries had gone no further. The time which he had fixed upon was not yet come, and we shall presently see how very dexterously he prolonged it.

We arrived, with these delays, pretty late at Goutto (the village so called), and took up our lodgings in the house of a considerable person, who had abandoned it upon our approach, thinking us part of Fasil's army. Though Fasil's horse was of use in protecting us from the poor, yet it hurt us by alarming, and so depriving us of the assistance of the opulent, such as our present landlord, who, if he had known we were strangers from Gondar, would have willingly staid and entertained us, being a relation and friend of Shalaka Welled Amlac.

As we heard distinctly the noise of the cataract, and had still a full hour and a half of light, while they were in search of a cow to kill (the cattle having been all driven away or concealed), I determined to visit the water-fall, lest I should be thereby detained the next morning. As Fasil's horse was fresh, by not being rode, I mounted him, instead of driving him before me, and took a servant of my own, and a man of the village whom Woldo procured for us, as I would not allow him to go himself. Being well armed, I thus set out, with the peasant on foot, for the cataract; and, after riding through a plain hard country, in some parts very stoney, and thick covered with trees, in something more than half an hour's easy galloping all the way, my servant and I came straight to the cataract, conducted there by the noise of the fall, while our guide remained at a considerable distance behind, not being able to overtake us.

This, known by the name of the First Cataract of the Nile, did not by its appearance come up to the idea we had formed of it, being scarce sixteen feet in

height, and about sixty yards over; but in many places the sheet of water is interrupted, and leaves dry intervals of rock. The sides are neither so woody nor verdant as those of the cataract of the Assar; and it is in every shape less magnificent, or deserving to be seen, than is the noble cataract at Alata, before described, erroneously called the Second Cataract; for below this there is a water-fall, nearly west of the church of Boskon Abbo, not much above the place where we swam our horses over in May, and less than this first cataract of which I am speaking; and nearer the source, there is another still smaller, before the Nile joins the river Gumetti, after falling from the plains of Sacala; and there are several still smaller, between the fountains and the junction of the Nile with the river Davola. These last mentioned, however, are very insignificant, and appear only when the Nile is low: in the rainy season, when the river is full, they are scarcely distinguished by ruffling the water as it passes.

Having satisfied my curiosity at this cataract, I galloped back the same road that I had come, without having seen a single person since I left Goutto. Fasil's horse went very pleasantly; he did not like the spur, indeed, but he did not need it. On our arrival, we found a cow upon the point of being killed; there was no appearance of any such to be found when I set out for the cataract, but the diligence and sagacity of Woldo had overcome that difficulty. By a particular manner of crying through his hands applied to his mouth, he had contrived to make some beasts answer him, who were hid in an unsuspected by-place, one of which being detected, was killed without mercy.

It was now, I thought, the proper time to give Woldo a lesson as to the manner in which I was re-

solved to behave among the Agows, who, I knew, had been reduced to absolute poverty by Fasil after the battle of Banja. I told him, that since the king had given me the small territory of Geesh, I was resolved to take up my abode there for some time; and also, to make my coming more agreeable, it was my intention for that year to discharge them of any taxes, which they paid the king, or their superior, Fasil, in whose places I then stood. "Stay," says Woldo, "don't be in such a hurry, see first how they behave." "No," said I, "I will begin by teaching them how to behave; I will not wait till their present misery prompts them to receive ill, (as they very naturally will do) a man, who comes, as they may think, wantonly, for curiosity only; to take from them and their starved families the little Fasil had left them: the question I ask you then is briefly this, Do you conceive yourself to be obliged to obey me, as to what I shall judge necessary to direct you to do, during my journey to Geesh and back again?" He answered, "By all means, or he could never else return to his master, Fasil." "This, then," said I, "is the line of conduct I mean to pursue, while I am among the Agows; you shall have money to buy every thing; you shall have money, or presents, or both, to pay those that serve us, or that shew us any kindness, and when we shall join your master, Fasil (as I hope we shall do together), you shall tell him that I have received his majesty's rent of the Agows of Geesh, and I will enter a receipt for it in the king's deftar, or revenue-book at Gondar, if we see him there, as I expect we shall, upon my return. I, moreover, undertake, that we shall gain more by this than by any other method we could have pursued." "There is one thing, however," says Woldo; "you would not surely have me free them the dues paid by every village

where a king's servant is employed to conduct strangers, as I am you?" "No, no; I do not go so near as that; we shall only buy what you would have otherwise taken by force for my use."

"Some years ago," says Woldo, "when I was a young man, in king Yasous's time, a white man, called Negade Ras Georgis, had both Geesh and Sacala given him by the king; he went there twice a year, and staid a month or more at a time; he was a great hunter and drinker, and a devil for the women; he not only spent what he got from the village, but all the money he brought from Gondar into the bargain; it was a jovial time, as I have heard; all was merriment. The first day he came there, some of the men of Sacala, out of sport, disputing with three of the Agows of Zeegam, fell to it with their knives and lances, and four men were killed in an instant upon the spot; fine stout fellows, every one like a lion; good men all of them: there are no such days seen now, unless they come about when you are there, and then I shall have my share of every thing." "Woldo," said I, "with all my heart; I shall be otherwise employed; but you shall be at perfect liberty to partake of every sport, always except the diversion of killing four men." But, I had observed this day, with some surprise, that he doubted several times whether we were on the way to the fountains of the Nile, or not; and I did not think this prospect of entertainment, which I held out to him, was received with such joy as I expected, or as if he meant to partake of it.

Strates had refused to go to the first cataract, having so violent an appetite that he could not abandon the cow; and, after my arrival, it was his turn to watch that night. When I was lain down to rest in a little hovel, like a hog's sty, near where they were sit-

ting, I heard a warm dispute among the servants, and, upon inquiry, found Strates was preparing steaks on a gridiron, to make an entertainment for himself, while the rest were sleeping; these, on the other hand, were resolved to play him a trick to punish his gluttony. When the steaks were spread upon the gridiron, Woldo had undertaken to pour some fine dust, or sand, through the hole in the roof, which served as a chimney; and this he had done with success as often as Strates went to any distance from the fire.—Not content, however, with the position in which he then was, but desirous to do it more effectually, he attempted to change his place upon the roof, where he stood, thinking it all equally strong to bear him; but in this he was mistaken; the part he was removing to suddenly gave way, and down he came upon the floor, bringing half the roof and part of the wall, together with a prodigious dust, into the fire.

The surprise and sight of his own danger made Woldo repeat some ejaculation to himself in Galla. My servants, who were waiting the success of the scheme, cried, "The Galla! the Galla!"—and, Strates, who thought the whole army of wild Galla had surrounded the house, fell upon his face, calling out "Maruni! Maruni! Spare me! spare me!" I was in a profound sleep when roused by the noise of the roof, the falling of the man, and the cry of Galla! Galla! I started up, and laid hold of a musket loaded with slugs, a bayonet at the end of it, and ran to the door, when the first thing I saw was Woldo examining his hurts, or burns, but without any arms. A laugh from without made me directly suppose what it was, and I was presently fully satisfied by the figure Strates and Woldo made, covered with dirt and dust from the roof; but, while they were entertaining

themselves with this foolish trick, the thatch that had fallen upon the fire began to flame, and it was with the utmost difficulty we extinguished it, otherwise the whole village might have been burnt down. I heard distinctly the noise of the cataract all this night.

CHAP. XII.

Leave Goutto—Mountains of the Moon—Roguery of Woldo, our Guide—Arrive at the Source of the Nile.

It was the 3d of November, at eight o'clock in the morning, that we left the village of Goutto, and continued, for the first part of the day, through a plain country full of acacia-trees, and a few of other sorts; but they were all pollards, that is, stunted, by having their tops cut off when young, so that they bore now nothing but small twigs, or branches; these, too, seemed to have been lopped early. As there appeared no doubt that this had been done purposely, and for use, I asked, and was informed that we were now in the honey country, and that these twigs were for making large baskets, which they hung upon trees at the sides of their houses, like bird cages, for the bees to make their honey in them during the dry months; all the houses we passed afterwards, and the trees near them, were furnished with these baskets, having numerous hives of bees at work in them; the people themselves seemed not to heed them, but they were an excessive plague to us by their stings during the day, so that it was only when they were out in the fields, or at night in the house, that we were free from this inconvenience.

The high mountain of Berfa now bore south from us, about ten miles distant; it resembles, in shape, a gunner's wedge, and towers up to the very clouds,

amidst the lesser mountains of the Agow. Sacala is south south-east. The country of the Agows extends from Berta on the south to the point of due west, in form of an amphitheatre, formed all round by mountains, of which that of Banja lies south south-west about nine miles off. The country of the Shangalla, beyond the Agows, lies west north-west. From this point all the territory of Goutto is full of villages, in which the fathers, sons, and grandsons live together; each degree, indeed, in a separate house, but near, or touching each other, as in Maitsha, so that every village consists of one family.

At three quarters past eight we crossed a small, but clear river, called Dee-ohha, or the river Dee. It is singular to observe the agreement of names of rivers in different parts of the world, that have never had communication together. The Dee is a river in the north of Scotland. The Dee runs through Cheshire likewise in England; and the Dee is a river here in Abyssinia. Kelti is the name of a river in Monteith; Kelti, too, we found in Maitsha. Arno is a well-known river in Tuscany; and we found another Arno, below Emfras, falling into the lake Tzana. Not one of these rivers, as far as I could observe, resemble each other in any one circumstance, nor have they a meaning or signification in any one language I know *.

The church of Abbo is a quarter of a mile to our right, and the church of Eion Mariam bears east by south half a mile. We resumed our journey at half-past nine, and, after advancing a few minutes, we came

* The resemblance in these names is purely accidental; those of the British rivers are derived from the Celtic and Welsh, which are radically the same. But the Abyssinian streams were never frequented by any Celtic tribes; though sanguine etymologists find no difficulty in tracing them from Asia, or Africa.—E.

in sight of the ever-memorable field of Fagitta. At a quarter past ten we were pointing to the south-east, the two great clans of the Agow, Zeegam and Dengui, being to the south-west; the remarkable mountain Davenanza is about eight miles off, bearing south-east by south, and the course of the Nile is east and west. Eastward still from this is the high mountain of Adama, one of the ridges of Amid-amid, which form the entrance of a narrow valley on the east side, as the mountains of Litchambara do on the west *. In this valley runs the large river Jemma, rising in the mountains, which, after passing through part of Maitsha, falls below into the Nile. The mountains from this begin to rise high, whereas at Samseen they are very low and inconsiderable. Adama is about ten miles from our present situation, which is also famous for a battle fought by Fasil's father, while governor of Damot, against the people of Maitsha, in which they were totally defeated.

We now descended into a large plain full of marshes, bounded on the west by the Nile, and at ten and three quarters we crossed the small river Diwa, which comes from the east and runs to the westward: though not very broad, it was by much the deepest river we had passed; the banks of earth being perpendicular and infirm, and the bottom foul and clayey, we were obliged to dismount ourselves, unload the mules, and carry our baggage over. This was a troublesome operation, though we succeeded at last. I often regretted to Woldo, that he could not here find some of the good people like the Agows at the ford of the Nile; but he shook his head, saying, "These are another sort of stuff; we may be very thankful if they let us pass ourselves: in the flat country I do not wish

* Written in Ethiopic Amidamit and Ledj-ambra.—E.

to meet one man on this side the mountain Aformasha."

In this plain, the Nile winds more in the space of four miles than, I believe, any river in the world *; it makes above a hundred turns in that distance, one of which advances so abruptly into the plain that we concluded we must pass it, and were preparing accordingly, when we saw it make as sharp a turn to the right, and run far on in a contrary direction, as if we were never to have met it again: the Nile is not here above 20 feet broad, and is nowhere above a foot deep.—The church of Yasous was above three quarters of a mile to the west.

At one o'clock we ascended a ridge of low hills, which terminates this plain to the south. The mountains behind them are called Atta; they are covered thick with brushwood, and are cut through with gullies and beds of torrents. At half past one we were continuing S. E.; in a few minutes after we passed a clear, but small, stream, called Minch, which signifies the Fountain. At two o'clock we arrived at the top of the mountain of Attata, and from this discovered the river Abola, coming from the S. S. E. and, in a few minutes, passed another small river, called Giddili, which loses itself immediately in a turn, or elbow, which the river Abola makes here below. At half past two we descended the mountains of Attata, and immediately at the foot of it crossed a small river of the same name, which terminates the territory of Attata; here, to the south, it is indeed narrow, but very difficult to pass by reason of its muddy bottom. The sun all along the plain of Goutto had been very hot till now, and here so excessively, that it quite overcame us; what was worse, Woldo declared himself so ill, that he doubted if he could go any farther, but belie-

* A plan of these windings is in the Journals.—E.

ved he should die at the next village. Though I knew too much of the matter to think him in any danger from real disease, I saw easily that he was infected with a counterfeit one, which I did not doubt was to give me as much trouble as a real one would have done.

At three o'clock, however, we pushed on towards the S. E., and began to enter into the plain of Abola, one of the divisions of the Agow. The plain, or rather valley, of Abola, is about half a mile broad for the most part, and nowhere exceeds a mile. The mountains that form it on the east and west side, are at first of no considerable height, and are covered with herbage and acacia trees to the very top; but, as they run south, they increase in height, and become more rugged and woody. On the top of these are most delightful plains, full of excellent pasture; the mountains to the west are part of, or at least join, the mountain of Aformasha, where, from a direction nearly S. E. they turn south, and inclose the villages and territory of Sacala, which lie at the foot of them, and still lower, that is more to the westward, the small village of Geesh, where are the long-expected fountains of the Nile.

These mountains are here in the form of a crescent; the river runs in the plain along the foot of this ridge, and along the side of it, Kasmati Fasil passed after his defeat at Fagitta. The mountains which form the east side of this plain run parallel to the former in their whole course, and are part of, or at least join, the mountains of Litchambara, and these two, when behind Aformasha, turn to the south, and then to the S. W. taking the same form as they do, only making a greater curve, and inclosing them likewise in the form of a crescent, the extremity of which terminates immediately above the small lake Gooderoo, in the

plain of Assoa, below Geesh, and directly at the fountains of the Nile.

The river Abola comes out of the valley between these two ridges of mountains of Litchambara and Aformasha, but does not rise there; it has two branches, one of which has its source in the western side of Litchambara, near the centre of the curve where the mountains turn south; the other branch rises on the mountain of Aformasha, and the east side of our road as we ascended to the church of Mariam. Still behind these are the mountains of Amid-amid, another ridge, which begin behind Samseen, in the S. W. part of the province of Maitsha, though they become high only from the mountain of Adama; but they are in shape exactly like the former ridges, embracing them in a large curve in the shape of a crescent.

Between Amid-amid and the ridge of Litchambara is the deep valley now known by the name of St George; what was its ancient, or Pagan name, I could not learn. Through the middle of this valley runs the Jemma, a river equal to the Nile, if not larger, but infinitely more rapid: after leaving the valley, it crosses that part of Maitsha on the east of the Nile, and loses itself in that river below Samseen, near the ford where our army passed in the unfortunate retreat of the month of May: it sources or fountains are three; they rise in the mountains of Amid-amid, and keep on close to the east side of them, till the river issues out of the valley into Maitsha.

This triple ridge of mountains, disposed one range behind the other, nearly in form of portions of three concentric circles, seems to suggest an idea, that they are the Mountains of the Moon, or the *Montes Lunæ* of antiquity, at the foot of which the Nile was said to rise; in fact, there are no others. Amid-amid may perhaps exceed half a mile in height; they certainly do

not arrive at three quarters, and are greatly short of that fabulous height given them by Kircher. These mountains are all of them excellent soil, and everywhere covered with fine pasture; but as this unfortunate country had been for ages the seat of war, the inhabitants have only ploughed and sown the top of them, out of the reach of enemies or marching armies. On the middle of the mountain are villages built of a white sort of grass, which makes them conspicuous at a great distance; the bottom is all grass, where their cattle feed continually under their eye; these, upon any alarm, they drive up to the top of the mountains out of danger. The hail lies often upon the top of Amid-amid for hours, but snow was never seen in this country, nor have they a word* in their language for it. It is also remarkable, though we had often violent hail at Gondar, and when the sun was vertical, it never came but with the wind blowing directly from Amid-amid.

At ten minutes past three o'clock we crossed the small river Iworra, in the valley of Abola; it comes from the east, and runs westward into that river. At a quarter after four, we halted at a house in the middle of the plain, or valley. This valley is not above a mile broad, the river being distant about a quarter, and runs at the foot of the mountains. This village, as indeed were all the others we had seen, since our crossing the Nile at Goutto, was surrounded by large, thick plantations, of that singular plant the Ensete, one of the most beautiful productions of nature, as well as most agreeable and wholesome food of man.

* By this is meant the Amharic, for in Geez, the word for snow is Tilze: this may have been invented for translating the scriptures.

It is said to have been brought by the Galla from Narea, first to Maitsha, then to Goutto, the Agows, and Damot, which last is a province on the south side of the mountains of Amid-amid. This plant, and the root called Denitch, (the same which is known in Europe by the name of the Jerusalem artichoke, a root deserving more attention than is paid to it in our country), supply all these provinces with food.

We were but seldom lucky enough to get the people of the villages to wait our arrival; the fears of the march of the Galla, and the uncertainty of their destination, made them believe always we were detachments of that army, to which the presence of Fasil's horse, driven constantly before us, very much contributed; we found the village where we alighted, totally abandoned, and in it only an earthen pot, with a large slice of the ensete plant boiling in it; it was about a foot in length, and ten inches broad, and was almost ready for eating: we had fortunately meat with us, and only wanted vegetables to complete our dinner. We appropriated to ourselves, without scruple, this ensete; and, by way of reparation, I insisted upon leaving, at parting, a brick, or wedge of salt, which is used as small money in Gondar, and all over Abyssinia; it might be, in value, about a shilling.

On the 4th of November, at eight o'clock, we left our small village on the plain of Abola, without having seen any of the inhabitants: however, we were sure there were among them some who were curious enough to wish to look at us, for, in walking late at night, I heard several voices speaking low among the ensete trees and canes. It was not possible to collect what they said in the low tone in which they spoke; and I should not probably have been much wiser, had they spoken louder, as their language was that of their country, the Agow, of which I did not understand

one word; however, I thought I could distinguish they were women. the men, apprehending we were enemies, having probably taken refuge in the mountains above. I did every thing possible to surround or surprise one or two of these people, that by good usage and presents, we might reconcile them to us, and get the better of their fear; but it was all to no purpose; they fled much quicker than we could pursue them, as they knew the country, and it was not safe to follow them far in the wilderness, lest we might stumble upon people who might misinterpret our intentions.

I was determined to try whether, by taking away that scare-crow, Fasil's horse, from before us, and riding him myself, things would change for the better: this I distinctly saw, that Woldo would have wished the horse to have gone rather without a rider, and this I observed the night I went to the cataract from Goutto. Sitting on the king's saddle, or in his seat at Gondar, is high treason; and Woldo thought, at all times, but now especially, that his master was inferior to no king upon earth. I even attributed to that last expedition at Goutto his silence and apparent sickness ever since; but in this last circumstance I found afterwards that I was mistaken: be that as it would, my plan was very different from Woldo's as to the horse; he was become a favourite; and I was resolved, in the course of my journey, to improve his talents so, that he should make a better appearance on his return to Gondar, than he did when I received him from Fasil at Bamba. I compounded, as I conceived, with Woldo's scruples, by laying aside Fasil's saddle, which was a very uneasy one, besides that it had iron rings instead of stirrups; in short, as this horse was very beautiful, (as many of the Galla horses are) and all of one colour, which was that of lead,

without any spot of white, I hoped to make him an acceptable present to the king, who was passionately fond of horses. Here it may not be improper to observe, that all very great men in Abyssinia choose to ride horses of one colour only, which have no distinguishing mark whereby they may be traced in retreats, flights, or such unlucky expeditions: it is the king alone, in battle, who rides upon a horse distinguished by his marks, and that on purpose that he may be known. The present king, however, was too brave to owe his safety to any such expedient.

There were many villages in this valley, which seemed to have escaped the havock of war, nor had they that air of poverty and misery so apparent in all the other habitations we had seen. We were pointing nearly east south-east, when we passed the small river Googueri, which, like all the others on this side of the mountain, falls into the Abola. We then left the valley of Abola on our right, and began to travel along the sides of the mountains on the west. At three quarters after eight we passed a violent torrent called Karnachiuli, which falls from north east into the Abola. At nine we again descended into the valley, and, a few minutes after, came to the banks of the Caccino, which flows from the north just above, and joins the Abola. Here we halted for a little to rest our men, and to adjust thoroughly the minutes of our journey, that the whole might appear in a distinct manner in the map that I intended to make on my return to Gondar.

At half past nine we again set out, and, a few minutes after, passed the river Abola, which gives its name to the valley into which we had descended, and receives many lesser streams, and is of considerable breadth. I could discover no traces of fish either in it or in any river since we left the Assar, from which circumstance I apprehend, that, in these torrents from

the mountains, almost dry in summer, and which run with vast rapidity in winter, the spawn and fish are both destroyed in different seasons by different causes.

After coasting some little time along the side of the valley, we began to ascend a mountain on the right, from which falls almost perpendicularly a small, but very violent stream, one of the principal branches of the Abola, which empties itself into the Nile, together with the other branch, a still more considerable stream, coming from east south-east, along the valley between Litchambara and Aformasha. At eleven o'clock our course was south by east, and we passed near a church dedicated to the Virgin, on our left. The climate seemed here most agreeably mild, the country covered with the most lively verdure, the mountains with beautiful trees and shrubs, loaded with extraordinary fruits and flowers. I found my spirits very much raised with these pleasing scenes, as were those of all my servants, who were, by our conversation, made geographers enough to know we were approaching to the end of our journey. Both Strates and I, out of the Lamb's hearing, had shot a variety of curious birds and beasts. All but Woldo seemed to have acquired new strength and vigour. He continued in his air of despondency, and seemed every day to grow more and more weak. At a quarter past eleven we arrived at the top of the mountain, where we, for the first time, came in sight of Sacala, which extends in the plain below from west to the point of south, and there joins with the village of Geesh, built on a similar occasion.

Sacala, full of small low villages, which, however, had escaped the ravages of the late war, is the easternmost branch of the Agows, and famous for the best honey. The small river Kebezza, running from the east, serves as a boundary between Sacala and Aformasha; after joining two other rivers, the Gometti

and Googueri, which we presently came to, after a short course nearly from S. E. to N. W. it falls into the Nile a little above its junction with the Abola.

At three quarters past eleven, we passed the river Kebezza, and descended into the plain of Sacala; in a few minutes, we also passed the Googueri, a more considerable stream than the former; it is about sixty feet broad, and perhaps eighteen inches deep, very clear and rapid, running over a rugged, uneven bottom of black rock. At a quarter past twelve, we halted on a small eminence, where the market of Sacala is held every Saturday. Horned cattle, many of the greatest beauty possible, with which all this country abounds; large asses, the most useful of all beasts for riding or carriage; honey, butter, ensete for food, and a manufacture of the leaf of that plant, painted with different colours like Mosaic work, for matts, are here exposed for sale in great plenty; the butter and honey, indeed, are chiefly carried to Gondar, or to Burè; but Damot, Maitsha, and Gojam likewise take a considerable quantity of all these commodities.

At a quarter after one o'clock we passed the river Gometti, the boundary of the plain: we were now ascending a very steep and rugged mountain, the worst pass we had met on our whole journey. We had no other path but a road made by the sheep or the goats, which did not seem to have been frequented by men; for it was broken, full of holes, and in other places obstructed with large stones that seemed to have been there from the creation. It must be added to this, that the whole was covered with thick wood, which often occupied the very edge of the precipices on which we stood, and we were everywhere stopt and entangled by that execrable thorn the kantuffa, and several other thorns and brambles nearly as inconvenient. We ascended, however, with great alacrity, as we conceived we were surmounting the last difficulty after

the many thousands we had already overcome. Just above this almost impenetrable wood, in a very romantic situation, stands St Michael, in a hollow space like a nitch between two hills of the same height, and from which it is equally distant. This church has been unfrequented for many years; the excuse they make is, that they cannot procure frankincense, without which, it seems, their mass or service cannot be celebrated; but the truth is, they are still Pagans; and the church, having been built in memory of a victory over them above a hundred years ago, is not a favourite object before their eyes, but a memorial of their inferiority and misfortune. This church is called St. Michael Sacala, to distinguish it from another more to the southward, called St Michael Geesh.

At three quarters after one we arrived at the top of the mountain, whence we had a distinct view of all the remaining territory of Sacala, the mountain of Geesh, and church of St Michael Geesh, about a mile and a half distant from St Michael Sacala, where we then were. We saw, immediately below us, the Nile itself, strangely diminished in size, and now only a brook that had scarcely water to turn a mill. I could not satiate myself with the sight, revolving in my mind all those classical prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment. The lines of the poet came immediately into my mind, and I enjoyed here, for the first time, the triumph which already, by the protection of Providence, and my own intrepidity, I had gained over all that were powerful, and all that were learned, since the remotest antiquity:—

> Arcanum natura caput non prodidit ulli,
> Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre;
> Amovitque sinus, et gentes maluit ortus
> Mirari, quam nosse tuos.——
>
> LUCAN.

I was awakened out of this delightful reverie by an alarm that we had lost Woldo our guide. Though I long had expected something from his behaviour, I did not think, for his own sake, it could be his intention to leave us. The servants could not agree when they last saw him: Strates and Aylo's servant were in the wood shooting, and we found by the gun that they were not far from us; I was therefore in hopes that Woldo, though not at all fond of fire-arms, might be in their company; but it was with great dissatisfaction I saw them appear without him. They said, that, about an hour before, they had seen some extraordinary large, rough apes, or monkeys, several of which were walking upright, and all without tails; that they had gone after them through the wood till they could scarce get out again; but they did not remember to have seen Woldo at parting. Various conjectures immediately followed; some thought he had resolved to betray and rob us; some conceived it was an instruction of Fasil's to him, in order to our being treacherously murdered; some again supposed he was slain by the wild beasts, especially those apes or baboons, whose voracity, size, and fierce appearance were exceedingly magnified, especially by Strates, who had not the least doubt, if Woldo had met them, but that he would be so entirely devoured, that we might seek in vain without discovering even a fragment of him. For my part, I began to think that he had been really ill when he first complained, and that the sickness might have overcome him upon the road; and this, too, was the opinion of Ayto Aylo's servant, who said, however, with a significant look, that he could not be far off; we therefore sent him, and one of the men that drove the mules, back to seek after him; and they had not gone but a few hundred yards

when they found him coming, but so decrepid, and so very ill, that he said he could go no farther than the church, where he was positively resolved to take up his abode that night. I felt his pulse, examined every part about him, and saw, I thought evidently, that nothing ailed him. Without losing my temper, however, I told him firmly, That I perceived he was an impostor; that he should consider that I was a physician, as he knew I cured my master's first friend, Welleta Yasous; that the feeling of his hand told me as plain as his tongue could have done, that nothing ailed him; that it told me likewise he had in heart some prank to play, which would turn out very much to his disadvantage. He seemed dismayed after this, said little, and only desired us to halt for a few minutes, and he should be better; "for," says he, "it requires strength in us all to pass another great hill before we arrive at Geesh."

"Look you," said I, "lying is to no purpose; I know where Geesh is as well as you do, and that we have no more mountains or bad places to pass through; therefore, if you choose to stay behind, you may; but to-morrow I shall inform Welleta Yasous at Bure of your behaviour." I said this with the most determined air possible, and left them, walking as hard as I could down to the ford of the Nile. Woldo remained above with the servants, who were loading their mules; he seemed to be perfectly cured of his lameness, and was in close conversation with Ayto Aylo's servant for about ten minutes, which I did not choose to interrupt, as I saw that man was already in possession of part of Woldo's secret. This being over, they all came down to me, as I was sketching a branch of yellow rose-tree, a number of which hang over the ford.

The whole company passed without disturbing me; and Woldo, seeming to walk as fast as ever, ascended a gentle rising hill, near the top of which is St Michael Geesh. The Nile here is not four yards over, and not above four inches deep where we crossed; it was indeed become a very trifling brook, but ran swiftly over a bottom of small stones, with hard black rock appearing amongst them: it is at this place very easy to pass, and very limpid, but, a little lower, full of inconsiderable falls; the ground rises gently from the river to the southward, full of small hills and eminences, which you ascend and descend almost imperceptibly. The whole company had halted on the north side of St Michael's church, and there I reached them, without affecting any hurry.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, but the day had been very hot for some hours, and they were sitting in the shade of a grove of magnificent cedars, intermixed with some very large and beautiful cusso-trees, all in flower; the men were lying on the grass, and the beasts fed, with their burdens on their backs, in most luxuriant herbage. I called for my herbary *, to lay the rose-branch I had in my hand smoothly, that it might dry without spoiling the shape; having only drawn its general form, the pistil and stamina, the finer part of which (though very necessary in classing the plant) crumble and fall off, or take different forms in drying, and therefore should always be secured by drawing while green. I just said indifferently to Woldo in passing, that I was glad to see him recovered; that he would presently be well, and should fear nothing. He then got up, and

* Hortus siccus, a large book for extending and preserving dry plants.

desired to speak with me alone, taking Aylo's servant along with him. "Now," said I, very calmly, "I know by your face you are going to tell me a lie. I do swear to you solemnly, you never, by that means, will obtain any thing from me, no not so much as a good word; truth and good behaviour will get you every thing; what appears a great matter in your sight, is not perhaps of such value in mine; but nothing except truth and good behaviour will answer to you; now I know for a certainty you are no more sick than I am.' "Sir," said he, with a very confident look, "you are right; I did counterfeit; I neither have been, nor am I at present, any way out of order; but I thought it best to tell you so, not to be obliged to discover another reason, that has much more weight with me, why I cannot go to Geesh, and much less show myself at the sources of the Nile, which I confess are not much beyond it, though I declare to you there is still a *hill* between you and those sources." "And pray," said I calmly, "what is this mighty reason? have you had a dream, or a vision in that trance you fell into when you lagged behind, below the church of St Michael Sacala?" "No," says he, "it is neither trance, nor dream, nor devil either; I wish it were no worse; but you know as well as I, that my master Fasil defeated the Agows at the battle of Banja. I was there with my master, and killed several men, among whom some were of the Agows of this village Geesh; and you know the usage of this country; when a man, in these circumstances, falls into their hands, his blood must pay for their blood."

I burst into a violent fit of laughter, which very much disconcerted him. "There," said I, "did not I say to you it was a lie you was going to tell me? do not think I disbelieve or dispute with you the vanity

of having killed men; many men were slain at that battle; somebody must, and you may, have been the person who slew them; but do you think that I can believe that Fasil, so deep in that account of blood, could rule the Agows in the manner he does, if he could not put a servant of his in safety among them, twenty miles from his residence? do you think I can believe this?" "Come, come," said Aylo's servant to Woldo, "did you not hear that truth and good behaviour will get you every thing you ask? Sir," continues he, "I see this affair vexes you, and what this foolish man wants will neither make you richer nor poorer; he has taken a great fancy for that crimson silk-sash which you wear about your middle. I told him to stay till you went back to Gondar; but he says he is to go no farther than to the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac in Maitsha, and does not return to Gondar; I told him to stay till you had put your mind at ease, by seeing the fountains of the Nile, which you were so anxious about. He said, after that had happened, he was sure you would not give it him, for you seemed to think little of the cataract at Goutto, and of all the fine rivers and churches which he had shewn you; except the head of the Nile shall be finer than all these, when, in reality, it will be just like another river, you will then be dissatisfied, and not give him the sash."

I thought there was something very natural in these suspicions of Woldo; besides, he said he was certain that, if ever the sash came into the sight of Welled Amlac, by some means or other he would get it into his hands. This rational discourse had pacified me a little; the sash was a handsome one; but it must have been fine indeed to have stood for a minute between me and the accomplishment of my wishes. I laid my hand then upon the pistols that stuck in my

girdle, and drew them out to give them to one of my suite, when Woldo, who apprehended it was for another purpose, ran some paces back, and hid himself behind Aylo's servant. We were all diverted at this fright, but none so much as Strates, who thought himself revenged for the alarm he had given him by falling through the roof of the house at Goutto. After having taken off my sash, "Here is your sash, Woldo," said I; "but mark what I have said, and now most seriously repeat to you, truth and good behaviour will get any thing from me; but if, in the course of this journey, you play one trick more, though ever so trifling, I will bring such a vengeance upon your head, that you shall not be able to find a place to hide it in, when not the sash only will be taken from you, but your skin also will follow it; remember what happened to the Seis at Bamba."

He took the sash, but seemed terrified at the threat, and began to make apologies. "Come, come," said I, "we understand each other; no more words; it is now late; lose no more time, but carry me to Geesh, and the head of the Nile, directly, without preamble, and show me the hill that separates me from it. He then carried me round to the south side of the church, out of the grove of trees that surrounded it. "This is the hill," says he, looking archly, "that, when you was on the other side of it, was between you and the fountains of the Nile; there is no other. Look at that hillock of green sod in the middle of that watery spot; it is in that the two fountains of the Nile are to be found: Geesh is on the face of the rock where yon green trees are. If you go the length of the fountains, pull off your shoes, as you did the other day, for these people are all Pagans, worse than those that were at the ford; and they believe in nothing that you believe, but only in this river, to which they pray

every day, as if it were God; but this perhaps you may do likewise." Half undressed as I was by loss of my sash, and throwing my shoes off, I ran down the hill, towards the little island of green sods, which was about two hundred yards distant; the whole side of the hill was thick grown over with flowers, the large bulbous roots of which appearing above the surface of the ground, and their skins coming off on treading upon them, occasioned me two very severe falls before I reached the brink of the marsh; I after this came to the island of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art, and I stood in rapture over the principal fountain which rises in the middle of it.

It is easier to guess than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment—standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry, of both ancients and moderns, for the course of near three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last, only by the difference of the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly, and without exception, followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour, had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of those myriads these princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off this stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography. Though a mere private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over kings and their armies; and every comparison was leading nearer and nearer to presumption, when the place itself where I stood, the object of my vain-glory, suggested what depressed my short-lived triumph. I was but a few minutes arrived at the sources of the Nile, through number-

less dangers and sufferings, the least of which would have overwhelmed me, but for the continual goodness and protection of Providence; I was, however, but then half through my journey, and all those dangers which I had already passed, awaited me again on my return. I found a despondency gaining ground fast upon me, and blasting the crown of laurels I had too rashly woven for myself. I resolved, therefore, to divert, till I could, on more solid reflection, overcome its progress.

I saw Strates expecting me on the side of the hill. "Strates," said I, "faithful squire! come and triumph with your Don Quixote, at that island of Barataria, where we have most wisely and fortunately brought ourselves! come, and triumph with me over all the kings of the earth, all their armies, all their philosophers, and all their heroes!" "Sir," says Strates, "I do not understand a word of what you say, and as little what you mean: you very well know I am no scholar. But you had much better leave that bog; come into the house, and look after Woldo; I fear he has something further to seek than your sash, for he has been talking with the old devil-worshipper ever since we arrived." "Did they speak secretly together," said I. "Yes, sir, they did, I assure you." "And in whispers, Strates!" "Every syllable; but for that," replied he, "they need not have been at the pains; they understood one another, I suppose, and the devil, their master, understands them both; but as for me, I comprehend their discourse no more than if it was Greek, *as they say*. Greek!" says he, "I am an ass; I should know well enough what they said if they spoke Greek." "Come," said I, "take a draught of this excellent water, and drink with me a health to his majesty King George III. and a long line of princes." I had in my hand a large cup made of a cocoa-nut shell, which I procured in Arabia, and which was

brim-full *. He drank to the king speedily and cheerfully, with the addition of, "Confusion to his enemies," and tossed up his cap with a loud huzza. "Now, friend," said I, "here is to a more humble, but still a sacred name, here is to—Maria!" He asked if that was the Virgin Mary? I answered, "In faith, I believe so, Strates." He did not speak, but only gave a humph of disapprobation.

The day had been very hot, and the altercation I had with Woldo had occasioned me to speak so much, that my thirst, without any help from curiosity, led me to these frequent libations at this long-sought-for spring, the most ancient of all altars. "Strates," said I, "here is to our happy return. Come, friend, you are yet two toasts behind me; can you ever be satiated with this excellent water?" "Look you, sir," says he, very gravely, "as for King George, I drank to him with all my heart, to his wife, to his children, to his brothers and sisters, God bless them all! Amen; —but as for the Virgin Mary, as I am no Papist, I beg to be excused from drinking healths which my church does not drink. As for our happy return, God knows, there is no one wishes it more sincerely than I do, for I have been long weary of this beggarly country. But you must forgive me if I refuse to drink any more water. They say these savages pray over that hole every morning to the devil, and I am afraid I feel his horns in my belly already, from the great draught of that hellish water I drank first." It was, indeed, as cold water as ever I tasted. "Come, come," said I, "dont be peevish, I have but one toast more to drink," "Peevish or not peevish," replied Strates, "a drop of it shall never again cross my throat: there

* This shell was brought home by Mr Bruce, and is still preserved.—T.

is no humour in this, no joke; shew us something pleasant as you used to do; but there is no jest in meddling with devil-worshippers, witchcraft, and inchantments, to bring some disease upon one's self here, so far from home in the fields. No, no; as many toasts in wine as you please, or better in brandy, but no more water for Strates. I am sure I have done myself harm already with these follies—God forgive me!" "Then," said I, "I will drink it alone, and you are henceforward unworthy of the name of Greek; you do not even deserve that of a Christian." Holding the full cup then to my head, "Here is to Catharine, Empress of all the Russias, and success to her heroes at Paros; and hear my prediction from this altar to-day; Ages shall not pass, before this ground, whereon I now stand, shall become a flourishing part of her dominions."

He leaped on this a yard from the ground. "If the old gentleman has whispered you this," says he, "out of the well, he has not kept you long waiting; tell truth and shame the devil, is indeed the proverb, but truth is truth, wherever it comes from; give me the cup; I will drink that health though I should die." He then held out both his hands. "Strates," said I, be in no such haste; remember the water is enchanted by devil-worshippers; there is no jesting with these, and you are far from home, and in the fields, you may catch some disease, especially if you drink the Virgin Mary; God forgive you. Remember the horns the first draught produced; they may with this come entirely through and through." "The cup, the cup," says he, "and fill it full; I defy the devil, and trust in St George and the dragon. Here is to Catharine, Empress of all the Russias; confusion to her enemies, and damnation to all at Paros." "Well, friend," said I, "you was long in resolving, but you have done it at last to some purpose; I am

sure I did not drink damnation to all at Paros." "Ah!" says he, "but I did, and will do it again—Damnation to all at Paros and Cyprus, and Rhodes, Crete, and Mytilene into the bargain: Here it goes with all my heart. Amen, so be it." "And who do you think," said I, "are at Paros?" "Pray, who should be there," says he, "but Turks and devils, the worst race of monsters and oppressors in the Levant. I have been at Paros myself; was you ever there?" "Whether I was ever there or not, is no matter," said I; "the empress's fleet, and an army of Russians, are now possibly there; and here you, without provocation, have drank damnation to the Russian fleet and army, who have come so far from home, and are at this moment sword in hand, to restore you to your liberty, and the free exercise of your religion; did not I tell you, you was no Greek, and scarcely deserved the name of Christian?" "No, no, sir," cries Strates, "for God's sake do not say so; I would rather die. I did not understand you about Paros; there was no malice in my heart against the Russians. God will bless them, and my folly can do them no harm—Huzza! Catherine and victory!" whilst he tossed his cap into the air.

A number of the Agows had appeared upon the hill, just before the valley, in silent wonder what Strates and I were doing at the altar. Two or three only had come down to the edge of the swamp, had seen the grimaces and action of Strates, and heard him huzza; on which they had asked Woldo, as he entered into the village, what was the meaning of all this? Woldo told them, that the man was out of his senses, and had been bit by a mad dog; which reconciled them immediately to us. They, moreover, said, he would be infallibly cured by the Nile; but the custom, after meeting with such a misfortune, was to

drink the water in the morning fasting. I was very well pleased both with this turn Woldo gave the action, and the remedy we stumbled upon by mere accident, which discovered a connection believed to subsist at this day, between this river and its ancient governor the dog-star.

CHAP. XIII.

Attempts of the Ancients to discover the Source of the Nile—No Discovery made in latter Times—No Evidence of the Jesuits having arrived there—Kircher's Account fabulous—Discovery completely made by the Author.

FAR in antiquity as history or tradition can lead us, farther still beyond the reach of either (if we believe it was the first subject of hieroglyphics,) begins the inquiry into the origin, cause of increase, and course, of this famous river. It is one of the few phænomena in natural history that ancient philosophers employed themselves in investigating; and people of all ranks seemed to have joined in the research with a degree of perseverance very uncommon. But still this discovery, though often attempted under the most favourable circumstances, has as constantly miscarried; it has baffled the endeavours of all ages, and at last come down as great a secret as ever, to these latter times of bold and impartial inquiry.

Though Egypt was not created by the Nile, it was the first region that received benefit from it. It was there, in the time of its overflowing, that it appeared in all its beauty; and Egypt measured its prosperity or desolation by the abundance or scantiness of this

stream. It was not, however, in Egypt, the inquiries into the time and cause of its inundation began; all these were settled and reduced to rule before a city was built within the reach of the inundation.

Man, that knew not the cause, was also ignorant of the limits of that inundation; having only in his mind a tradition of deluges that had formerly destroyed the earth, traces of which appeared on every hill. He was, with reason, astonished to see, that, wild and wide as the torrent raged, it was subject to the controul of some power, that prohibited it from irregularity in the time of its coming, and forbade it to destroy the land it was destined to enrich; and he saw it subside within its banks and overflow no more, after it had afforded to husbandry the utmost advantage it could receive. But what the controuling power was he knew not; consequently could never divine whether this regularity was transitory or perpetual; whether it was not liable, at some time, to break its bonds, and sweep both man and his labours together into the ocean.

Whether the Nile was constant to its time of rising, whether it did not revolve in some cycle or period, or whether, arrived at a certain number of inundations, it was not to stop and overflow no more, was what could only be determined by the investigation of the cause, and the observations of a series of years. Before this was thoroughly settled and known, the farmer might perhaps cultivate the plain of Egypt, but would not build there; he would fix his dwelling on the mountain in defiance of the flood; and that this was so, is evident from what we saw at Thebes, which the Aborigines did not build, as we see thousands of caves, dug out of solid rock, that were the dwellings of the first inhabitants, the Troglodytes, beyond Meroe.

* The philosphers of Meroe seem therefore to have been the first that undertook the compiling a series of observations, which should teach their posterity the proper times when they could settle in, and cultivate Egypt, without fear or danger from the Nile. That island, full of flocks and shepherds, under a sky perpetually cloudless, having a twilight of short duration, placed between the Nile and Astaboras, where the two rivers collect the waters that fall in the east and the west of Ethiopia, and mix together in a latitude where the tropical rains cease, was too high to be overflowed by the Nile, but near enough to behold every alteration in that river's increase from the instant it happened.

Sirius, though belonging to the southern hemisphere, and of course very distant from the first vertical of Meroe, was still the brightest star in the heavens, probably the largest, perhaps the nearest us; in any of these cases, the most obvious and proper for observation was soon found, by its heliacal rising, to indicate the instant when all Egypt was to prepare for the reception of a stranger flood, without which the husbandman's labour and expectation of harvest were in vain. The fields were dusty and desert, the farms without tenants, the tenants without seed, the houses perhaps situated in the middle of the supervenient in-

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* The leading doctrine of Mr Bruce's theory on this subject is, that Meroe was the first seat of civilization and science. He considers Egypt to have received its knowledge, as well as first inhabitants, from that region. It may be proper for the reader to fix in his mind this radical tenet, in order to establish, or reject it, on sufficient evidence. It must also be considered, that Lucan, the authority given by Mr Bruce in his account of the attempts made by Sesostris, Cambyses, and Cæsar, was a poet, and of course gave a colouring and arrangement to these incidents not very compatible with real history.—E.

undation, when, at a stated time, this most brilliant sign shone forth to warn the master to seek out a peasant for his field, the peasant to procure seed for his tenement, and the stranger to remove his habitation from a situation soon destined to be laid wholly under water.

Nothing could be more natural than the inquiries how the increase of the flood was thus connected with the rising of the dog-star, now become the beginning of the rural year; many useful discoveries were therefore probably made in search after this, but the cause of the inundation remained still undiscovered; at last the effects being found regular, and the efficient cause inscrutable, no wonder if gratitude transferred to the star a portion of respect for the benefits men were persuaded they received from its influence. Though these observations were such as concerned Egypt and Nubia alone, yet from Egypt they passed as objects proper for inquiry, as problems of the greatest consequence to philosophers, and as phænomena worthy the attention of all that studied nature.

A great step towards the accounting for these phænomena was believed to be the discovery of the Nile's source; and this, as it was attended with very considerable difficulties, was thought therefore to be a proper object of investigation, even by kings, who discovered nations by conquering them, and by their power, revenue, and armies, removed most of those obstacles which, succeeding each other in detail, weary the diligence, overcome the courage, and baffle the endeavours of the most intrepid and persevering travellers.

Sesostris, one of the earliest and greatest conquerors of antiquity, is mentioned, amidst all his victories, earnestly to have desired to penetrate to the head of the Nile, as a glory he preferred to almost universal monarchy:—

Venit ad occasum, mundique extrema Sesostris,
Et Pharios currus regum cervicibus egit;
Ante tamen vestros amnes Rhodanumque, Padumque,
Quam Nilum de fonte bibit.———
LUCAN.

The attempt of Cambyses to penetrate into Ethiopia, and the defeat of his schemes, have been already narrated at sufficient length *.

—— Vesanus in ortus
Cambyses longi populos pervenit ad ævi.
Defectusque epulis, et pastus cæde suorum
Ignoto te, Nile, redit.———
LUCAN.

The attention paid by Alexander, the next prince who attempted an expedition towards these unknown fountains, merits a little more of our consideration. After he had conquered Egypt, and arrived at the temple of Jupiter Ammon (the celebrated and ancient deity of the Shepherds), in the Theban desert, the first question he asked was concerning the spot where the Nile rose. Having received from the priests sufficient directions for attempting the discovery, he is said, as the next very sensible step, to have chosen natives of Ethiopia, as the likeliest people to succeed in the search he had commanded them to make:—

Summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat,
Invidit Nilo, misitque per ultima terræ
Æthiopum lectos: illos rubicunda perusti
Zona poli tenuit, Nilum videre calentem.
LUCAN.

* Vol. II. b. ii. chap. v.

These Ethiopians, parting from their temple in the desert of Elvah, or Oasis, or which will come to the same thing, from the banks of the Nile, or Thebes, would hold nearly the same course as Poncet had done, till they fell in with the Nile about Moscho, in the kingdom of Dongola. They would continue the same route till they came to Halfaia, where the Bahar el Abiad (or white river) joins the Nile at Hojila, five miles above that town; and, to avoid the mountains of Kuara, they would continue on the west side of the Nile, between it and the Bahar el Abiad; and, keeping the Nile close on their left, they would follow its direction south to the mountains of Fazuclo, through countries where its course must necessarily be known. After having passed the great chain of mountains, called Dyre and Tegla, between lat. 11° and 12° N. where are the great cataracts, they again came into the flat country of the Gongas, as far as Bizamo, nearly in 9° N.; there the river, leaving its hitherto constant direction, N. and S. turns due E. and surrounds Gojam.

It is probable the discoverers, always looking for it to the south, took this unusual sudden turn east to be only a winding of the river, which would soon be compensated by an equal return to the west, where they would meet it again; they therefore continued their journey south, till near the Line, and never saw it more; as they could have no possible notion it had turned back behind them, and that they had left it as far north as lat. 11°. They reported then to Alexander what was truth, that they had ascended the Nile as far south as lat. 9°, where it unexpectedly took its course to the east, and was seen no more. The river, moreover, was not known, nor to be heard of near the Line, or farther southward, nor was it diminished in size, nor had it given any symptom they were near its

source; they had found the Nile *calentem* (warm), in a flat country, while they expected its rise in mountains among melting snows.

This discovery (for so far it was one) of the course of the river to the east, seems to have made a strong impression on Alexander's mind; so that when he arrived at near the head of the Indus, then swelled with the thawing snows of Mount Caucasus, and overflowing in summer, he thought he was arrived at the source of this famous river, the Nile, which he had before seen in the west, and rejoiced at it exceedingly, as the noblest of his achievements *. He immediately wrote to acquaint his mother of it; but being soon convinced of his error, and being far above propagating a falsehood, even for his own glory, he instantly erased what he had wrote upon that subject. This, however, did not entirely dissatisfy Alexander; for he proposed an expedition in person towards these fountains, if he had returned from India in safety.

—— Non illi flamma, nec undæ,
Nec sterilis Libye, nec Syrticus obstitit Ammon.
Isset in occasus, mundi devexa secutus:
Ambissetque polos, Nilumque a fonte bibisset:
Occurrit suprema dies, naturaque solum
Hunc potuit finem vesano ponere regi.

LUCAN.

It must no doubt seem preposterous to those that are not very conversant with the classics, that a prince so well instructed as Alexander himself was, who besides had with him in his army many philosophers, geographers, and astronomers, and was in constant correspondence with Aristotle, a man of almost uni-

* Arrianus de Exped. Alexandri, lib. vi.

versal knowledge,—that, after having seen the Nile in Egypt coming from the south, he should think he was arrived at the head of it while on the banks of the Indus, so far to the N. E. of its Ethiopian course. This difficulty, however, has a very easy solution in the prejudices of those times. The ancients were incorrigible as to their error in opinion concerning two seas.

The Caspian Sea they had sailed through in several directions, and had almost marched round it; they had conquered kingdoms between it and the sea; its water was sweet, it neither ebbed nor flowed, and yet they most ridiculously would have it to be part of the ocean. On the other hand, they as obstinately persisted in believing, that from the east coast of Africa, about latitude 15° south, a neck of land ran east and north east, and joined the peninsula of India, and by that means made this part of the ocean a lake. In vain ships of different nations sailed for ages to Sofala, and saw no such land; this only made them remove the imaginary neck of land further to the south; and though Eudoxus had sailed from the Red Sea around the Cape of Good Hope, which must have totally destroyed the possibility of the existence of that land supposed to join the two continents, rather than allow this, they rejected the information of this navigator, and treated it as a fable.

It was the constant opinion of the Greeks, that no river could rise in the torrid zone; likewise, that the melting of snow was the cause of the overflowing of all rivers in the heat of summer, and so of the Nile among the rest. When, therefore, Alexander heard, from his discoverers, that the Nile, about latitude 9°, ran straight to the east, and returned no more, he thought the river's course was eastward through the imaginary neck of land inclosing the imaginary lake,

and joining the peninsula of India, and that the river, after it had crossed, continued north till it came within reach of the thawing of the snows of Mount Caucasus; and this was also the opinion of Ptolemy the geographer.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second of those princes who had succeeded to the throne of Alexander in Egypt, was the next who marched into Ethiopia with an army against the Shangalla. His object was, not only to discover the source of the Nile, but also to procure a perpetual supply of elephants, to enable him to cope with the kings of Syria. The success of this expedition we have related in the second volume, book ii. chap. v.

Ptolemy Evergetes, his successor, in the 27th year of his reign, being in peace with all his neighbours, undertook an expedition to Ethiopia. His design was certainly to discover the fountains of the Nile, in which he had probably succeeded had he not mistaken the river itself. He supposed that the Siris, now the Tacazze, was the Nile, and, ascending in the direction of its stream, he came to Axum, the capital of the province of Sire and of Ethiopia. But the story he tells about the snow, which he found knee-deep on the mountains of Samen, makes me question whether he ever crossed the Siris, or was himself an ocular witness of what he says he observed there.

Cæsar, between the acquisition of a rich and powerful kingdom, and the enjoyment of the finest woman in the world, the queen of it, is said to have employed so interesting an interval in a calm inquiry after the source of this river; and, in doing so at such a time, has surely paid it a greater compliment than it ever yet had received from any that attempted the discovery. On that night, which completed the destruction of the Egyptian monarchy, it is said this was the topic upon

which he entertained the learned of Alexandria while at supper; addressing himself to Achoreus, high priest of the Nile, he says,

—— Nihil est, quod noscere malim,
Quam fluvii causas, per secula tanta latentes,
Ignotumque caput: spes sit mihi certa videndi
Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam.
LUCAN.

The poet here pays Cæsar a compliment on his curiosity, or desire of knowledge, very much at the expence of his patriotism; for he makes him declare, in so many words, that he considered making war with his country as the greatest pleasure of his life, never to be abandoned, but for that superior gratification—the discovery of the fountains of the Nile.

Achoreus, proud of being consulted on such a subject by such a person, enters into a detail of information.

Quæ tibi noscendi Nilum Romane cupido est,
Hæc Phariis, Persisque fuit, Macedumque tyrannis:
Nullaque non ætas voluit conferre futuris
Notitiam: sed vincit adhuc natura latendi.
LUCAN.

* Nero, as we are told, sent two centurions in search of this river, and on their return they made their report in presence of Seneca, who does not seem

* Lucan, who wrote these verses concerning the Nile in the reign of Nero, in which this embassy was sent, may serve to give us an idea of the interest which this project excited at the time in the Roman capital. The copy of Pliny before me (Froben. Basiliæ, 1554) has 802 miles distance between Syene and Meroe.—E.

to have greatly distinguished himself by his inquiries. They reported, that, after having gone a very long way, they came to a king of Ethiopia, who furnished them with necessaries and assistance; and, with his recommendations, they arrived at some other kingdoms next to these, and then came to immense lakes, the end of which was unknown to the natives, nor did any one ever hope to find it. This was all the satisfaction Nero procured, and it is probable these centurions went not far, but were discouraged, and turned back with a story invented to cover their want of spirit. For we know now that there are no such lakes between Egypt and the source of the Nile, but the lake Tzana, or Dembea; and while on the banks of this, they might have seen the country beyond, and on every side of it *. But I rather think no such attempt was made, unless they endeavoured to pass the country of the Shangalla about the end of June or July, when that province, as I have already said, is absolutely impassable, by the rapid vegetation of the trees, and the ground being all laid under water, which they might have mistaken for a series of lakes.

After all these great efforts, the learned of antiquity began to look upon the discovery as desperate, and never to be attained; for which reason both poets and historians speak of it in a strain of despondency:

> Secreto de fonte cadens; qui semper inani
> Quærendus ratione latet, nec contigit ulli,
> Hæc vidisse caput, fertur sine teste creatus.
>
> CLAUDIAN.

* Another reason why I think this journey of the centurions is fictitious is, that they say the distance between Syene and Meroe is 600 miles.—Plin. lib. 6. cap. 29.

And Pliny, as late as the time of Trajan, says, that these fountains were in his time utterly unknown—"Nilus incertis * ortus fontibus, it per deserta et ardentia, et immenso longitudinis spatio ambulans †,"—nor was there any other attempt made later by the ancients.

From this it is obvious, that none of the ancients ever made this discovery of the source of the Nile. They gave it up entirely, and "caput Nili quærere" became a proverb, marking the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of any such undertaking. Let us now examine the pretensions of the moderns.

The first in latter days who visited Abyssinia was a monk, and at the same time a merchant; he was sent by Nonnosus, ambassador of the emperor Justin, in the fifth year of the reign of that prince, that is, A. D. 522. He is called Cosmas the hermit, as also Indoplaustes. Many have thought that this name was given him from his having travelled much in India, properly so called; but we have no evidence that Cosmas was ever in the Asiatic India, and I rather imagine he obtained his name from his travels in Abyssinia, called by the ancients India. He went as far as Axum, and seems to have paid proper attention to the difference of climates, names, and situations of places, but he arrived not at the Nile, nor did he attempt it. The province of the Agows was probably at that time inaccessible, as the court was then in Tigre at Axum, a considerable distance beyond the Tacazze, and is to the eastward of it.

None of the Portuguese who first arrived in Abyssinia, neither Covillan, Roderigo de Lima, Christopher

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* Pliny says *incertis*, by which he rather meant to express the variety of accounts, than total ignorance.—E.

† Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

de Gama, nor the patriarch Alphonso Mendes, ever saw, or indeed pretended to have seen, the source of the Nile. At last, in the reign of Za Denghei, came Peter Paez, who laid claim to this honour: how far his pretensions are just, I am now going to consider. Paez has left a history of the mission, and some remarkable occurrences that happened in that country, in two thick volumes octavo, closely written in a plain stile. Copies of this work were circulated through every college and seminary of Jesuits that existed in his time, and which have been everywhere found in their libraries since the disgrace of that learned body.

Athanasius Kircher, a Jesuit, well known for his extensive learning and voluminous writings, and still more for the rashness with which he advances the most improbable facts in natural history, is the man that first published an account of the fountains of the Nile, and, as he says, from this journal left by Peter Paez.

I must, however, here observe, that no relation of this kind was to be found in three copies of Peter Paez's history, to which I had access when in Italy, on my return home. One of these copies I saw at Milan, and, by the interest of friends, had an opportunity of perusing it at my leisure. The other two were at Bologna and Rome. I ran through them rapidly, attending only to the place where the description ought to have been, and where I did not find it; but having copied the first and last page of the Milan manuscript, and comparing them with these two last mentioned, I found that all the three were, word for word, the same, and none of them contained one syllable of the discovery of the source.

However this be, I do not think it is right for me to pronounce thus much, unless I bring col-

lateral proofs to strengthen my opinion, and to show that no such excursion was ever pretended to have been made by that missionary, in any of his works, unless that which passed through the hand of Kircher.

Alphonso Mendes came into Abyssinia about a year after. Paez's death. New and desirable as that discovery must have been to himself, to the pope, king of Spain, and all his great patrons in Portugal and Italy, though he wrote the history of the country, and of the particulars concerning the mission in great detail, and with good judgment, yet he never mentions this journey of Peter Paez, though it probably must have been conveyed to Rome and Portugal, after his inspection, and under his authority.

Balthazar Tellez, a learned Jesuit, has wrote two volumes in folio with great candour and impartiality, considering the spirit of those times. He declares his work to be compiled from this history of Alphonso Mendes the patriarch, from the two volumes of Peter Paez, as well as from the regular reports made by the individuals of the company in some places, and by the provincial letters in others; to all which he had complete access, as also to the annual reports of Peter Paez among the rest, from 1598 to 1622. Yet Tellez makes no mention of such a discovery, though he is very particular as to the merit of each missionary during the long reign of Sultan Segued, or Socinios, which occupies more than half of the two volumes.

After these strong presumptions, that Peter Paez neither made such a journey, nor ever pretended it, I shall submit the account that Paez himself, or Kircher for him, has given of the expedition and consequent discovery; and if any of my readers can persuade themselves that a man of genius, such as was Peter Paez, transported by accident to these fountains, and exulting as he does upon the discovery, the value of

which he seems so have known well, could yet have given such a description as he does, I am then contented with being only the partner of Peter Paez.

Before I state the account of his observations in his own, or in Kircher's words, I have one observation to made regarding the dates and time of the journey. That memorable day which has been fixed upon for the discovery, is the 21st of April 1618. The rains are then begun, and on that account the season being very unwholesome, armies, without extreme necessity, are rarely in the field; between September and February at farthest is the time the Abyssinian army is abroad from the capital, and in action.

There are two nations of Agows in Abyssinia, the one near the fountains of the Nile, called the Agows of Damot; the other near the head of the Tacazze, in the province of Lasta, called the Tcheratz Agows. Now, we see from the annals of Socinios's reign, that he had several campaigns against the Agows. The first was in the fourth year of his reign, in the year 1608; his annals say it was against the Tcheratz Agows. His second campaign was in the seventh year of his reign, or 1611; that, too, was against the Agows of Lasta; so that if Peter Paez was with the emperor in either of these campaigns, he could not have seen the head of any river but that of the Tacazze. The third campaign was in 1625, against Sacala, Geesh, and Ashoa, when the Galla made an inroad into Gojam, but retired upon the royal army's marching against them, and crossed the Nile into their own country. Socinios upon this had advanced against the Agows of Damot, then in rebellion also, and had fought with Sacala, Ashoa, and Geesh likewise, the clan immediately contiguous to the sources. Now, this was surely the time when Peter Paez, or any at-

tendant on the emperor, might have seen the fountains of the Nile in safety, as the king's army, in whole or in part, must have been encamped near, or perhaps, upon the very sources themselves; a place, of all others, suited for such a purpose; but this was in the year 1625, and Peter Paez died in the year 1622.

I shall now state, in Kircher's own words, translated into English, the description he has given, as from Paez, of the sources which he saw; and I will fairly submit, to any reader of judgment, whether this is a description he ought to be content with from an eye-witness; whether it may not suit the sources of any other river as well as those of the Nile; or whether in itself it is distinct enough to leave one clear idea behind it.

"The river *, at this day, by the Ethiopians is called the Abaoy; it rises in the kingdom of Gojam, in a territory called Sabala, whose inhabitants are called Agows. The source of the Nile is situated in the west part of Gojam, in the highest part of a valley, which resembles a great plain on every side, surrounded by high mountains. On the 21st of April, in the year 1618, being here, together with the king and his army, I ascended the place, and observed every thing with great attention; I discovered first two round fountains, each about four palms in diameter, and saw, with the greatest delight, what neither Cyrus, † king of the Persians, nor Cambyses, nor Alexander the Great, nor the famous Julius Caesar, could ever discover. The two openings of these fountains have no issue in the plain on the top of the mountain, but flow from the root of it. The second fountain lies about a stone-cast west from the first: the inhabitants

* In Oedipo Syntag. I. cap. vii. p. 57.

† I never heard that Cyrus had attempted this discovery

say that this whole mountain is full of water, and add, that the whole plain about the fountain is floating and unsteady, a certain mark that there is water concealed under it; for which reason, the water does not overflow at the fountain, but forces itself with great violence out at the foot of the mountain. The inhabitants, together with the emperor, who was then present with his army, maintain that that year it trembled little on account of the drought, but other years, that it trembled and overflowed so as that it could scarce be approached without danger. The breadth of the circumference may be about the cast of a sling; below the top of this mountain the people live about a league distant from the fountain to the west; and this place is called Geesh, and the fountain seems to be a cannon-shot distant from Geesh; moreover, the field where the fountain is, is upon all sides difficult of access, except on the north side, where it may be ascended with ease."

I shall make only a few observations upon this description, sufficient to shew that it cannot be that of Paez, or any man who had ever been in Abyssinia. There is no such place known as Sabala; he should have called it Sacala: in the Ethiopic language Sacala means the highest ridge of land, where the water falls down equally on both sides, from east and west, or from north and south. So the sharp roofs of our houses, or tops of our tents, formed in that manner, are called Sacala, because the water runs down equally on opposite sides; so does it in the highest lands in every country, and so here in Sacala, where the Nile runs to the north: but several streams, which form the rivers Lac and Temsi, fall down the cliff, or precipice, and proceed southward in the plain of Ashoa, about 300 feet below the level of the ground where the mountain of Geesh stands, at the very foot of which is the marsh wherein are the sources of the river.

Again, neither Sacala nor Geesh are on the west side of Gojam, nor approach to these directions; as, first the high mountains of Lickambara, then the still higher of Amid-amid, are to be crossed over, before you reach Gojam from Sacala; and after descending from that high barrier of mountains called Amid-amid, you come into the province of Damot, when the whole breadth of that province is still between you and the west part of Gojam. These are mistakes which it is almost impossible to make, when a man is upon the spot, in the midst of a whole army, every one capable, and surely willing (as he was a favourite of the king,) to give him every sort of information; nor was there probably any one there, who would not have thought himself honoured to have been employed to fetch a straw for him from the top of Amid-amid.

Both the number and situations of the fountains, and the situations of the mountain and village of Geesh with respect to them, are therefore absolutely false, as the reader will observe in attending to my narrative and the map. This relation of Paez's was in my hand the 5th of November, when I surveyed these fountains, and all the places adjacent. I measured all his distances with a gunter's chain in my own hand, and found every one of them to be imaginary; and these measures so taken, as also the journal now submitted to the public, were fairly and fully written the same day that they were made, before the close of each evening.

It is not easy to conceive what species of information Paez intends to convey to us by the observation he makes beneath, "That the water, which found way at the foot of the mountain, did not flow at the top of it." It would have been very singular if it had, and I fully believe, that a mountain, yielding the water at

its top, when it had free access to run out at its bottom, would have been one of the most curious things the two Jesuits could ever have seen in any voyage. But what mountain is it he is speaking of? he has never named any one, but has said the Nile was situated in the highest part of a plain. I cannot think he means by this, that the highest part of a plain is a mountain; if he does, it is a species of description which would need an interpreter. He says again, the mountain is full of water, and trembles; and that there is a village below the top of the mountain, on the mountain itself. This I never saw; they must have cold and slippery quarters in that mountain, or whatever it is; and if he means the mountain of Geesh, there is not a village within a quarter of a mile of it. The village of Geesh is in the middle of a high cliff, descending into the plain of Ashoa. The bottom of that cliff or plain is 300 feet, as I have already said, below the base of the mountain of Geesh, and the place where the fountains rise.

Paez next says, that it is three miles from that village of Geesh to the fountains of the Nile. Now, as my quadrant was placed in my tent, on the brink of the cliff of Geesh, it was necessary for me to measure that distance; and, by allowing for it, to reduce my observations to the exact spot where the sources rose. I did accordingly, with a chain, measure from the brink of the precipice to the centre of the altar, in which the principal fountain stands, and found it 1760 feet, or 586 yards 2 feet; and this is the distance Paez calls a league, or the largest range of a shell shot from a mortar. This, I do aver, is an error that is absolutely impossible for any traveller to commit upon the spot, or else his narrative, in general, should have very little weight in point of precision.

I shall close these observations with one, which I

think must clearly evince Paez had never been upon the spot. He says the field, in which the fountains of the Nile are, is of very difficult access, the ascent to it being very steep, excepting on the north, where it is plain and easy. Now, if we look at the beginning of this description, we should think it would be the descent, not the ascent, that would be troublesome; for the fountains were placed in a valley; and people rather descend into vallies, than ascend into them: but supposing it a valley in which there was a field upon which there was a mountain, and on the mountain these fountains, still I say, that these mountains are nearly inaccessible on three sides, but that the most difficult of them all is the north, the way we ascend from the plain of Goutto. From the east, by Sacala, the ascent, if made from the valley of Litchambara, and from the plain of Assoa, to the south, you have the almost perpendicular craggy cliff of Geesh, covered with thorny bushes, trees, and bamboos, which conceal the mouths of the caverns; and, on the north, you have the mountains of Aformasha, thick set with all sorts of thorny shrubs and trees, especially with the kantufla; these thickets are, moreover, full of wild beasts, especially huge, long haired baboons, which we frequently met walking upright. Through these high and difficult mountains, we have only narrow paths, like those of sheep, made by the goats, or the wild beasts we are speaking of, which, after we had walked on them for a long space, landed us frequently at the edge of some valley, or precipice, and forced us to go back again to search for a new road. From towards Zeegam, to the westward, and from the plain where the river winds so much, is the only easy access to the fountains of the Nile; and they that ascend to them by this way, will not think even that approach too easy.

It remains only for me to say, that neither have the Jesuits (the brethren of Paez in the mission, and his contemporaries), made any geographical use of this discovery, either in longitude or latitude; nor have the historians of his society, who have followed afterwards, with all the information and documents before them, thought proper even to quote his travels; and it will not be easy, from the authority of a man like Athanasius Kircher, writing at Rome, to support the reality of such a discovery, not to be found in the genuine writings of Peter Paez himself. With such a voyage, if it had been real, there should have been published an itinerary; and most of the Jesuits were capable enough to have made a rough longitude and latitude, in the country where they resided for near one hundred years. Add to this, no observation appears from any Jesuit of the idolatry or Pagan worship, which prevailed near the source of the Nile, and this would seem to have been their immediate province.

From Dancaz they might have taken very properly their departure, and, by a compass, the use of which was then well known to the Portuguese, they might have kept their route to those fountains without much trouble, and with a sufficient degree of exactness to shew all the world the road by which they went. They were not fifty miles distant from Geesh when at Gorgora, and they have erred about sixty, which is ten miles more than the whole distance; this happened because they sought the fountains in Gojam, from which, at Gorgora, they knew themselves to be at that distance, and where the source of the Nile never was.

When I set out from Gondar, whose latitude and longitude I had first well ascertained, I thought, in such a pursuit as this, where local discovery was the only thing sought after in all ages, that the best way was to substitute, perhaps, a drier journal, or itinerary,

to a more pleasant account; with this view, I kept the length of my journies each day by a watch, and my direction by the compass. I did observe, indeed, many altitudes of the sun and stars at Dingleber, at Kelti, and at Goutto; and, lastly, I ascertained the other extreme, the sources of the Nile, by a number of observations of latitude, and by a very distinct and favourable one for the longitude: I calculated none of these celestial observations till I went back to Gondar. I returned by a different way on the other side of the Nile, and made one observation of the sun at Welled Abea Abbo, the house of Shakala Welled Amlac, of whom I am now about to speak. Arrived at Gondar, I summed up my days journies, reduced my bearings and distances to a plain course, as if I had been at sea, taking a mean where there was any thing doubtful, and in this topographical draught laid down every village through which I had passed, or which I had seen at a small distance out of the road, to which I may add every river, an immense number of which I had crossed between Gondar and Geesh, whither I was going. The reader, upon the inspection of this small map, will form some, but a very inadequate idea of the immense labour it cost me: However, the result, when I arrived at Gondar, amply rewarded me for my pains, upon comparing my route with the compass, to what it came to be when ascertained by observation; I found my error of computation upon the whole to be something more than nine miles in latitude, and very near seven in longitude; an error not perceptible in the journey upon any reduced scale, and very immaterial to all purposes of geography in any large one.

Now, Peter Paez, or any man laying claim to a discovery so long and ardently desired, should surely have done the same; especially as from Gorgora, he

had little more than half of the journal to keep. But, if it were true, that he made the discovery, which Kircher attributes to him, still, for want of this necessary attention, he has left the world in the darkness he found it; he travelled like a thief, discovered that secret source, and took a peep at it, then covered it again as if he had been affrightened at the sight of it.

Ludolf and Vossius are very merry, without mentioning names, with this story of the discovery, which they think Kircher makes for Peter Paez, whom they call the River-Finder. They say, it is extremely laughable to think, that the emperor of Abyssinia brought a Jesuit from Europe to be the antiquary of his country, and to instruct him first, that the fountains of the Nile were in his dominions, and in what part of them. But, with leave of Vossius, this is a species of intemperate ill founded criticism; neither Kircher, nor Paez, nor whoever was author of that work, ever said they instructed the emperor about the place in his dominions where the Nile arose, as what he says is only that the Agows of Geesh reported that the mountain trembled in dry weather, and had done so that year, when the emperor, who was present, confirmed the Agow's report. This is not saying that Peter Paez told the emperor, encamped with his army upon the fountains, that the Nile rose in his dominions, and that this was the source. Wo be to the works of Scaliger, Bochart, or Vossius, when they shall, in their turn, be submitted to such criticism as this!

A Protestant mission was the next, that I know of at least, which succeeded to that of the Portuguese, and consisted only of one traveller, Peter Heyling, of Lubec. Although he lived in the country nay, governed it several years, he never attempted to visit the source of that river. He had dedicated himself to a

studious and solitary life, having, among other parts of his reading, a very competent knowledge of Roman, or civil law. He is said to have given a great deal of his time to the compiling an institute of that law in the Abyssinian language for the use of that nation, upon a plan he had brought from Germany; but he did not live to finish it, though that and two other books, written in Geez, still exist in private hands in Abyssinia, at least I have been often confidentially told so.

The next and last attempt I shall take notice of, and one of the most extraordinary that ever was made for the discovery of the Nile, was that of a German nobleman, Peter Joseph le Roux, count de Desneval. This gentleman had been in the Danish navy ever since the year 1721, and in 1739 was raised to the rank of rear-admiral in that service. He says, in a publication of his own now lying before me, that the ambassador of Louis XIV. (M. du Roule), and all those sent by the Dutch and English to visit that country, had perished, because they were ignorant of the proper key to enter that country, which he flattered himself he had found in Denmark.

In 1759 he resigned his Danish commission, and began his first attempt in Egypt, whilst, for the greater facility of travelling in these mild and hospitable countries, he took his wife along with him. The count and countess went as far as Cairo, where they wisely began, at a festival, to dispute upon the etiquette with a Turkish mob, and this bringing the janizaries and guards of police upon them to take them into custody, the gray mare, as they say, proved the better horse, Madame la comtesse de Desneval exerted herself so much, that she defeated the body of janizaries, wounding several of them, armed only with a very feminine weapon, a pair of scissars, which, with full as much

profit, and much more decency, she might have been using, surrounded with her family at home.

However well acquainted the count was with the key for entering into Abyssinia, he had not apparently found the door. In fact, his first scheme was a most ridiculous one; he resolved to ascend the Nile in a barge armed with small cannon, and all necessary provisions for himself and wife. Some people, wiser than himself, whom he met at Cairo, suggested to him, that, supposing government might protect him so far as to allow his barge safely to pass the confines of Egypt and to the first cataract, where the malice of the pilots would certainly have destroyed her; and, supposing she was arrived at Ibrim, or Deir, the last garrisons depending on Cairo, and that this might have been atchieved by money (for by money any thing may be obtained from the government of Cairo), yet still, some days journey above the garrisons of Deir and Ibrim, begin the barren and dreadful deserts of Nubia; and farther south, at the great cataract of Jan Adel, the Nile falls twenty feet down a perpendicular rock; so here certainly was to be the end of his voyage. But the count, being ignorant of the manners of those countries, and exceedingly presumptuous of his own powers, flattered himself to obtain such assistance from the garrisons of Ibrim and Deir, that he could unscrew his vessel, take her to pieces, and carry her, by force of men, round behind the cataract, where he was to rescrew and launch her again into the Nile.

The Kennous, inhabiting near the cataract, have several villages, particularly two, one called Succout, or the place of tents, where Kaled Ibn el Waalid, after taking Syene in the Khalifat of Omar, encamped his army in his march to Dongola. The other, in a plain near the river, is called Asel Dimmo, or the Field of

Blood, where the same Kaled defeated an army of Nubians, who were marching to the relief of Dongola, which was by him immediately after besieged and taken. These two villages are on the Egyptian side of the cataract: the direct occupation of the inhabitants is gathering senna, where it very much abounds, and they carry it in boats down to Cairo. Above, and on the other side of the cataract, is another large village of the Kennous, called Takaki. Some of these miserable wretches were brought to the count, and a treaty made, that all these men of the two villages were to assist him in his re-embarkation, after he had got his barge round the cataract; and among these barbarians he would have lost his life.

The count, besides his wife, had brought with him his lieutenant, Mr Norden, a Dane, who was to serve him as draughtsman; but neither the count, countess, nor lieutenant understood one word of the languages. There are always (happily for travellers) wise and honest men among the French and Venetian merchants at Cairo, who, seeing the obstinacy of the count, persuaded him that it was more military, and more in the style of an admiral, to detach Norden, his inferior officer, to reconnoitre Ibrim, Deir, and the cataract of Jan Adel, as also to renew his treaty with the Kennous at Succout and Asel Dimmo.

Norden accordingly sailed in the common embarkations used upon the Nile; the voyage is in every body's hands. It has certainly a considerable deal of merit, but is full of squabbles and fightings with boatmen and porters, which might as well have been left out, as they lead to no instruction, but serve only to discourage travellers; for they were chiefly owing to ignorance of language. It was with the utmost difficulty, and after many disasters, that Norden arrived at Syene, and the first cataract; after which greater and

greater were encountered before he reached Ibrim, where the Kascheff put him in prison, robbed him of what he had in the boat, and scarcely suffered him to return to Cairo without cutting his throat, which, for a considerable time, he and his soldiers had determined to do.

This sample of the difficulties, or rather impossibility of the voyage into Abyssinia by Nubia discouraged the count; and much reason had he to be thankful that his attempt had not ended among the Kennous at Succout. He, therefore, changed his plan, and resolved to enter Abyssinia by a voyage round the Cape into the Indian Ocean, through the Straits of Babelmandeb into the Red Sea, and so to Massuah. In this voyage he began to make use of his Spanish commission, and, having taken two English ships, under protection of a neutral fort in the Isle of May, he was met there some days after by Commodore Barnet, who made all his ships prizes, and sent the count home passenger in a Portugueze ship to Lisbon*.

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* This chapter, dedicated by Mr Bruce to an examination into the pretensions of former discoverers of the head of the Abawi, shews what all along he and many others firmly believed, viz. that the Abawi was the Nile; an opinion current in Habbesh. But the reasoning will not satisfy any man that Paez had not visited these fountains. The obscurity of the sources of the Nile, and many other great rivers, especially in such a country as Africa, is easily accounted for. Difficult as it has been to reach the springs of the Abawi, those of the Nile have as yet escaped ocular detection. Who shall overcome the bigotry of the Arabs, and the persecuted fervour of the Pagan mountaineers of Jibbel el Kumr, not to mention the natural rudeness of the district itself, wherein

> Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem
> Occultoque caput, *quod adhuc latet?*
>
> LUCAN. (1811).

CHAP. XIV.

Description of the Sources of the Nile—Of Geesh—Accounts of its several Cataracts—Course from its Rise to the Mediterranean.

I HOPE that what I have now said will be thought sufficient to convince all impartial readers, that these celebrated sources have, as it were, by a fatality, remained to our days as unknown as they were to antiquity; no good, or genuine voucher, having yet been produced before capable of proving that they were discovered, or seen, by the curious eye of any traveller, from earliest ages to this day. And it is with confidence I propose to my reader, that he will consider me as still standing at these fountains, and patiently hear from me the recital of the origin, course, names, and circumstances of this the most famous river in the world, which he will in vain seek from books, or from any other human authority whatever, and which, by the care and attention I have paid to the subject, will, I hope, be found satisfactory here:

——— Non fabula mendax
Ausa loqui de fonte tuo est: ubicunque videris,
Quæreris; et nulli contigit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo sit læta suo, tua flumina prodam,
Quæ Deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum
Te mihi nosse dedit.—

LUCAN.

The Agows of Damot pay divine honour to the Nile; they worship the river, and thousands of cattle have been offered, and are still offered, to the spirit supposed to reside at its source. They are divided into clans, or tribes; and it is worthy of observation, that it is said there never was a feud, or hereditary animosity between any two of these clans; or if the seeds of any such were sown, they did not vegetate longer than till the next general convocation of all the tribes, who meet annually at the source of the river, to which they sacrifice, calling it by the name of the God of Peace. One of the least considerable of these clans, for power and number, has still the preference among its brethren, from the circumstance, that, in its territory, and near the miserable village that gives its name, are situated the much sought-for springs abovementioned.

Geesh, however, though not farther distant from these than 600 yards, is not in sight of the sources of the Nile. The country, upon the same plane with the fountains, terminates in a cliff about 300 yards deep down to the plain of Assoa, which flat country continues in the same subaltern degree of elevation, till it meets the Nile again about seventy miles southward, after it has made the circuit of the provinces of Gojam and Damot. This cliff seems purposely fashioned into many shelves or stages, each of which is occupied by a cluster of houses seldom above eight or ten in number; some above, some below, some along the side of each other, but chiefly occupying the space, or two-thirds of the middle of the cliff that is, none of them nearer to the top of the cliff, nor to the plain of Assoa below, than a distance equal to that proportion of the whole. The reason of choosing this situation is the fear of the Galla, who have often invaded

that part of Abyssinia, and have even exterminated some clans of Agows entirely.

In the middle of this cliff, in a direction straight north towards the fountains, is a prodigious cave, whether the work of nature or of art, I cannot determine. In it are many by-paths, so that it is very difficult for a stranger to extricate himself; it is a natural labyrinth, large enough to contain the inhabitants of the village, and their cattle. There are likewise two or three lesser ones, which I did not see. In this large one, I tired myself part of several days, endeavouring to reach as far northward as possible; but the air, when I had advanced something above one hundred yards, seemed to threaten to extinguish my candle by its dampness; and the people were besides not at all disposed to gratify my curiosity farther, after assuring me that there was nothing at the end more remarkable than I then saw, which I have reason to believe was the case.

The face of this cliff, which fronts to the south, has a most picturesque appearance from the plain of Assoa below; parts of the houses at every stage appearing through the thickets of trees and bushes with which the whole face of the cliff is thickly covered. Impenetrable fences, of the very worst kind of thorn, hide the mouths of the caverns above mentioned even from sight; there is no other communication with the houses either from above or below, but by narrow-winding sheep-paths, which through these thorns are very difficult to be discerned; for all are allowed to be overgrown with the utmost wildness, as a part of their defence. Lofty and large trees (most of them of the thorny kind) tower high up above the edge of the cliff, and seem to be a fence against people falling down into the plain. These are all, at their proper season, covered with flowers of different sorts and colours, so

are the bushes below on the face of the cliff. Every thorn in Abyssinia indeed bears a beautiful flower; a small atonement for the evils they occasion.

From the edge of the cliff of Geesh, above where the village is situated, the ground slopes with a very easy descent due north, and lands you at the edge of a triangular marsh above eighty-six yards broad, in the line of the fountains, and two hundred and eighty-six yards two feet from the edge of the cliff above the house of the priest of the river, where I resided. This triangle, supposing it a right one, will measure one hundred and ninety-six yards in its length, or in the perpendicular; I mean it did so on the 6th of November 1770; doubtless, like other marshes, in the middle of the dry season, and of the rains, it will vary its dimensions. I suppose that this perpendicular represents the north of the marsh, and immediately from the brink of it the ground rises in a rather steep bank, and forms a round hill not a hundred yards high, upon the top of which is placed the church of St Michael Geesh. I did not measure this distance, but am sure it is very little less than five hundred yards from the church to the middle fountain. On the east the ground descends likewise with a very easy though perceptible slope from the large village of Sacala, which gives its name to that territory. It is distant six miles from the source, but to sight seems scarcely to be two.

I shall suppose the sharp point of the triangle composed of the hypothenuse and the perpendicular, to point like the needle of a compass to Sacala, and the line of the hypothenuse to represent the south side of the marsh near the village Geesh. The base or line, uniting the west end of the hypothenuse, and forming the right angle with the other side, I suppose to be the edge of the marsh formed by the bottom of the mountain of Geesh; and from this west side of it rises this

high and beautiful mountain, quite detached from others, like a pyramid, which it resembles in its elegant and regular form. It is about 4870 feet high measured in the slope; for near one half way the ascent is very easy and gradual. The base being of a remarkable breadth, it then becomes exceedingly steep, but all the way covered with good earth, producing fine grass and clover, interspersed with wild flowers.

Upon the rock in the middle of this plain, the Agows used to pile up the bones of the beasts killed in sacrifice, mixing them with billets of wood, after which they set them on fire. This is now discontinued, or rather transferred to another place near the church, as they are at present indulged in the full enjoyment of their idolatrous rites, both under Fasil and Michael.

In the middle of this marsh (that is, about forty yards from each side of it), and something less from the bottom of the mountain of Geesh, arises a hillock of a circular form, about three feet from the surface of the marsh itself, though apparently founded much deeper in it. The diameter of this is something short of twelve feet; it is surrounded by a shallow trench, which collects the water and voids it eastward; it is firmly built with sod or earthen turf, brought from the sides, and constantly kept in repair; and this is the altar upon which all their religious ceremonies are performed. In the middle of this altar is a hole, obviously made, or at least enlarged, by the hand of man. It is kept clear of grass, or other aquatic plants; and the water in it is perfectly pure and limpid, but has no ebullition or motion of any kind discernible upon its surface. This mouth, or opening of the source, is some parts of an inch less than three feet diameter; and the water stood at that time, the 5th of November, about two inches from the lip or brim, nor did it ei-

ther increase or diminish during all the time of my stay at Geesh, though we made plentiful use of it.

Upon putting down the shaft of my lance at six feet four inches, I found a very feeble resistance, as if from weak rushes or grass; and about six inches deeper I found my lance had entered into soft earth, but met with no stones or gravel. This was confirmed by another experiment made on the 9th with a heavy plummet and line besmeared with soap, the bottom of which brought up at the above depth only black earth, such as the marsh itself and its sides are composed of.

Ten feet distant from the first of these springs, a little to the west of south, is the second fountain, about eleven inches in diameter; but this is eight feet three inches deep. And about twenty feet distant from the first, to the S. S. W. is the third source, its mouth being something more than two feet large, and it is five feet eight inches deep. Both these last fountains stand in the middle of small altars, made, like the former, of firm sod, but neither of them above three feet diameter, and having a foot of less elevation than the first, The altar in this third source seemed almost dissolved by the water, which in both stood nearly up to the brim; at the foot of each appeared a clear and brisk running rill; these uniting joined the water in the trench of the first altar, and then proceeded directly out, I suppose, at the point of the triangle, pointing eastward, in a quantity that would have filled a pipe of about two inches diameter.

The water from these fountains is very light and good, and perfectly tasteless; it was at this time most intensely cold, though exposed to the mid-day sun without shelter, there being no trees nor bushes nearer it than the cliff of Geesh on its south side, and the trees that surround Saint Michael Geesh on the north,

which, according to the custom of Abyssinia, is, like other churches, planted in the midst of a grove.

On Monday the 5th of November, the day after my arrival at Geesh, the weather perfectly clear, cloudless, and nearly calm, in all respects well adapted to observation, being extremely anxious to ascertain, beyond the power of controversy, the precise spot on the globe that this fountain had so long occupied unknown, I pitched my tent on the north edge of the cliff, immediately above the priest's house, having verified the instrument with all the care possible, both at the zenith and horizon. With a brass quadrant of three feet radius, by one meridan altitude of the sun's upper limb, all necessary equations and deductions considered, I determined the latitude of the place of observation to be 10° 59′ 11″; and, by another observation of the same kind made on the 6th, 10° 59′ 8″; after which, by a medium of thirty-three observations of stars, the largest and nearest, the first vertical, I found the latitude to be 10° 59′ 10″; a mean of which being 10° 59′ 9″, say 10° 59′ 10″; and if we should be so unnecessarily scrupulous as to add 15″ for the measured distance the place of the tent was south of the altar, then we shall have 10° 59′ 25″ in round numbers, for the exact latitude of the principal fountain of the Nile, though the Jesuits have supposed it 12° N. by a random guess; but this being nearly the latitude of Gondar, the capital from which they set out, shews plainly they knew not the precise latitude of either of these places.

On the 7th of November I was fortunate enough to be in time for the observation of an immersion of the first satellite of Jupiter, the last visible here before that planet's conjunction with the sun. My situation was very unfavourable; my view of the heavens being every way interrupted by a thick grove of bamboo canes,

with high and shady trees growing upon the head of the precipice. Jupiter was low, and the prodigious mass of that beautiful mountain of Geesh, bade fair to hide him before our business was done; I was therefore obliged to remove my telescope up to the edge of the cliff, after which, the weather being perfectly favourable, I had as fair and distinct a view of the planet as I could desire; and from that observation I did conclude unalterably the longitude of the chief fountain of the Nile to be 36° 55′ 30″ east of the meridian of Greenwich.

The night of the 4th, that very night of my arrival, melancholy reflections upon my present state, the doubtfulness of my return in safety, were I permitted to make the attempt, and the fears that even this would be refused, according to the rule observed in Abyssinia with all travellers who have once entered the kingdom; the consciousness of the pain that I was then occasioning to many worthy individuals, expecting daily that information concerning my situation which it was not in my power to give them; some other thoughts, perhaps, still nearer the heart than those, crowded upon my mind, and forbade all approach of sleep.

I was, at that very moment, in possession of what had, for many years, been the principal object of my ambition and wishes: indifference, which, from the usual infirmity of human nature, follows, at least for a time, complete enjoyment, had taken place of it. The marsh, and the fountains, upon comparison with the rise of many of our rivers, became now a trifling object in my sight. I remembered that magnificent scene in my own native country, where the Tweed, Clyde, and Annan, rise in one hill; three rivers, as I now thought, not inferior to the Nile in beauty, preferable to it in the cultivation of those countries through which

they flow; superior, vastly superior to it in the virtues and qualities of the inhabitants, and in the beauty of its flocks crowding its pastures in peace, without fear of violence from man or beast. I had seen the rise of the Rhine and Rhone, and the more magnificent sources of the Soane; I began, in my sorrow, to treat the inquiry about the source of the Nile as a violent effort of a distempered fancy:—

> What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?—

Grief, or despondency, now rolling upon me like a torrent; relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, I started from my bed in the utmost agony; I went to the door of my tent; every thing was still; the Nile, at whose head I stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt my slumbers, but the coolness and serenity of the night braced my nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented me.

It was true, that numerous dangers, hardships, and sorrows, had beset me through this half of my excursion; but it was still as true, that another Guide, more powerful than my own courage, health, or understanding, if any of these can be called man's own, had uniformly protected me in all that tedious half; I found my confidence not abated, that still the same Guide was able to conduct me to my now wished-for home: I immediately resumed my former fortitude, considering the Nile indeed as no more than rising from springs, as all other rivers do, but widely different in this, that it was the palm for three thousand years held out to all the nations in the world as a *detur dignissimo*, which, in my cool hours, I had thought was worth the attempting at the risk of my life, which

I had long either resolved to lose, or lay this discovery, a trophy in which I could have no competitor, for the honour of my country, at the feet of my sovereign, whose servant I was.

I had procured from the English ships, while at Jidda, some quick-silver, perfectly pure, and heavier than the common sort; warming therefore the tube gently at the fire, I filled it with this quick-silver, and, to my great surprise, found that it stood at the height of 22 English inches: suspecting that some air might have insinuated itself into the tube, I laid it by in a warm part of the tent, covered till morning, and returning to bed, slept there profoundly till six, when, satisfied the whole was in perfect order, I found it to stand at 22 English inches; neither did it vary sensibly from that height any of the following days I staid at Geesh; and thence I inferred, that, at the sources of the Nile, I was then more than two miles above the level of the sea; a prodigious height, to enjoy a sky perpetually clear, as also a hot sun, never overcast for a moment with clouds from rising to setting.

On the 6th of November, at a quarter past five in the morning, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 44°, at noon 96°, and at sun-set 46°. It was, as to sense, cold at night, and still more so an hour before sunrise.

The Nile, keeping nearly in the middle of the marsh, runs east for thirty yards, with a very little increase of stream, but perfectly visible, till met by the grassy brink of the land declining from Sacala. This turns it round gradually to the N. E. and then due north; and, in the two miles it flows in that direction, the river receives many small contributions from springs that rise in the banks on each side of it: there are two, particularly one on the hill at the back of St Michael Geesh, the other a little lower than it on the

other side, on the ground declining from Sacala. These last-mentioned springs are more than double its quantity; and being arrived under the hill whereon stands the church of St Michael Sacala, about two miles from its source, it there becomes a stream that would turn a common mill, shallow, clear, and running over a rocky bottom about three yards wide: this must be understood to be variable according to the season; and the present observations are applicable to the 5th of November, when the rains had ceased for several weeks. There is the ford which we passed going to Geesh, and we crossed it the day of our arrival, in the time of my conversation with Woldo about the sash.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this spot; the small rising hills about us were all thick covered with verdure, especially with clover, the largest and finest I ever saw; the tops of the heights crowned with trees of a prodigious size; the stream, at the banks of which we were sitting, was limpid and pure as the finest crystal; the ford, covered thick with a bushy kind of tree, that seemed to affect to grow to no height, but thick with foliage and young branches, rather to court the surface of the water, whilst it bore, in prodigious quantities, a beautiful yellow flower, not unlike a single wild rose of that colour, but without thorns; and, indeed, upon examination, we found that it was not a species of the rose, but of hypericum.

From the source to this beautiful ford, below the church of St Michael Geesh, I enjoyed my second victory over this coy river, after the first obtained at the fountains themselves. What might still be said of the world in general no longer applied to me:—

—— Nec contigit ulli
Hoc vidisse caput;

And again,

Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre.

Here, at the ford, after having stepped over it fifty times, I observed it no larger than a common mill stream. The Nile, from this ford, turns to the westward, and after running over loose stones occasionally, in that direction, about four miles farther, the angle of inclination increasing greatly, broken water, and a fall commences of about six feet, and thus it gets rid of the mountainous place of its nativity, and issues into the plain of Goutto, where is its first cataract; for, as I have said before, I don't account the broken water, or little falls, cataracts, which are not at all visible in the height of the rains.

Arrived in the plain of Goutto, the river seems to have lost all its violence, and scarcely is seen to flow; but, at the same time, it there makes so many sharp, unnatural windings, that it differs from any other river I ever saw *, making above twenty sharp angular peninsulas in the course of five miles, through a bare marshy plain of clay, quite destitute of trees, and exceedingly inconvenient and unpleasant to travel. After passing this plain, it turns due north, receives the tribute of many small streams, the Gometti, the Googueri, and the Kebezza, which descend from the mountains of Aformasha; and, united, fall into the Nile about twenty miles below its source; it begins

* A plan of the windings of the Nile in the plain of Goutto is inserted by Balugani in the Journal. These are singularly numerous, and very much resemble, though on a different scale what are called "the links of the river Forth," near Stirling, in Scotland.—E.

here to run rapidly, and again receives a number of beautiful rivulets, which have their rise in the heights of Litchambara, the semicircular range of mountains that pass behind, and seem to inclose Aformasha: These are the Caccino, the Carnachiuli, the Googueri, the Iworra, the Jeddeli, and the Minch; all which, running into the Davola, join the Nile something less than a mile west of the church of Abbo.

It is now become a considerable stream; its banks high and broken, covered with old trees for the space of about three miles; it inclines to the north-east, and winds exceedingly, and is then joined by the small river Diwa from the east. It then makes a semicircle, and receives Dee-ohha, turns sharply to the east, and falls down its second cataract at Kerr. About three miles below this cataract, the large, pleasant, and limpid Jemma, pays its tribute to the Nile. Though its course is now mostly north, through Maitsha on the east, and Aroosi and Sankraber on the west, it still is inclining toward the lake Tzana, and, after receiving the rivers Boha and Amlac Ohha, small streams from the west, and the Assar, Aroosi, and Kelti, large rivers from the east, it crosses the south end of the lake Tzana, for about seven leagues, preserving the colour of its stream distinct from that of the lake, till it issues out at the west side of it, in the territory of Dara, where there is a ford, though very deep and dangerous, immediately where it first resumes the appearance of a river.

The deep stream is here exceedingly rapid; the banks in the course of a few miles become very high, and are covered with a verdure, abundant and varied beyond all description: passing afterwards below Dara, it bounds that narrow stripe of flat country which is called Foggora, confined between the lake and the mountains of Begemder, till it arrives at its third ca-

taract of Alata, a small village of Mahometans, on the east side of the river, and there exhibits a scene that requires more fancy, and the description of a more poetical pen than mine; although the impression the sight of it made upon me will certainly never be removed but with life.

The course of the river is now S. E.; in that direction it washes the western part of Begemder and Amhara on the right; the river then incloses the province of Gojam, so that, in the circle that it makes in returning towards its source, that province remains always on the right.

From both sides the Nile receives a number of tributary streams; the Muga, Gammala, Abea, Aswari, and Mashillo, from the mountains of Gojam; and the Bashilo, Boha, and Geeshem, from those of Begemder and Amhara. It then passes below Walaka. The river now has a course near the southward, passes Upper and Lower Shoa. From these countries, on the east of the Nile, come the great rivers Samba, Jemma, Roma, with some others; and the Temsi, Gult, and Tzul, from the high country of the Agows, and Amid-amid to the northward. From Shoa the Nile winds to the S. W. to the W. N. W., nearly inclosing all the south of Gojam. Immediately adjoining to it, turning still more northerly, is the province of Bizamo, bordering on the river Yabous, which, coming from the southward, and terminating this province, falls into the Nile.

The Nile, now turned almost due north, approaches its source, so as to be distant from it only about 62 miles; it is here very deep and rapid, and is only fordable at certain seasons of the year. The * Galla,

* Since this nation settled on the confines of Habbesh, scarcely a year has passed without one or more inroads into the country,

however, when they invade Abyssinia, cross it at all times without difficulty, either by swimming, or on goats skins blown up like bladders: other means of passing are in small rafts, placed upon two skins filled with wind; or, twisting their hands round the horse's tail, they are drawn over by them. This last is the way that the women, who follow the armies of Abyssinia, cross unfordable rivers; a case that always occurs in late campaigns. Crocodiles abound exceedingly in this part of the Nile; but the people, who live on the banks of the river, have, or pretend to have, charms, which defend them even from the most voracious of these animals.

Adjoining to the Gongas, and bounding them on the north, arises a vast chain of very high mountains: the south side of this is inhabited by tribes of Gongas and others, but on the north-east side, nearest Abyssinia, is a nation of perfect blacks, called Guba. The Nile seems to have forced its way through a gap in this prodigious barrier, and falls down a cataract of about 280 feet. This is immediately followed by two others in the same ridge of mountains, both very considerable, if not compared with the first. This high ridge runs west, far into the continent of Africa, where it is called Dyre and Tegla; the east end (that is, east of the Nile) joins the mountainous country of Kuara, and is there called the Mountains of Fazuclo. These mountains, as far as I could learn, are all very fully inhabited throughout, by many powerful clans, or nations, mostly Pagans. It is, however, a country the

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either by the Boren, or Bertuma. During the reigns of Susneus, Facilidas, Hannes, Yasous I. down to the days of Yasous II, the annals are full of royal campaigns against this people, which, in general, had no other effect than to drive them back over the Nile, which they re-crossed next season.—E.

least known of any in Africa; but a very large quantity of gold is brought from thence, as well as many slaves; the gold is washed down by the torrents in the time of the tropical rains, and, upon these ceasing, they search after that metal, found in small pellets entangled among roots, branches, tufts of grass, hollows, or in any thing that can imprison and detain it. This is the fine gold of Sennaar, called Tibbar.

The Nile now runs close by Sennaar, in a direction nearly north and south; it then turns sharply toward the east, is brim-full, and vastly pleasant in the fair season, being indeed the only ornament of this bare and flat, though cultivated country. From Sennaar it passes many large towns inhabited by Arabs, all of them white people. The Nile then passes Gerri, and runs N. E. to join the Tacazze, passing in its way a large and populous town called Chendi, probably the ancient metropolis of Candace*.

If we are not to reject entirely the authority of ancient history, the island of Meroe, so famous in the first ages, must be found somewhere between the source of the Nile and this point, where the two rivers unite; for of the Nile we are certain, and it seems very clear that the Atbara is the Astaboras of the ancients. Pliny† says, it is the stream which incloses the left side of Meroe, as the Nile does the right; and we must consider him to be looking southward from Alexandria, when he uses the otherwise equivocal terms of right and left; and after this junction of these two rivers, the Nile receives or unites itself with no other till it falls into the sea at Alexandria.

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* Called, in the Ethiopic annals, Hendaque; wrote originally, I suppose, with an X or Ch.

† Lib. v. cap. ix. Nat. Hist.

Much inquiry has been made about this island, once a most distinguished spot on our globe, the cradle of science and philosophy, which spread itself from this to enlighten other nations; we are now full of uncertainty, searching in a desert for the place of its existence; such is the miserable instability of all human excellence. Nothing but confusion has followed this inquiry, because they who were engaged in it rather substituted vain systematical prejudices of their own, than set themselves to consider those lights which were immediately before them.

The Jesuits, and a French writer, who is a constant champion of their errors, have fixed the peninsula of Gojam to be the Meroe of the ancients. M. le Grande (the compiler alluded to) having in vain endeavoured to answer the objections against Gojam being Meroe, at last declares, in a kind of literary passion, that the ancients have spoken so differently about Meroe, that Gojam is as likely to be the place as any other.

I have a proper esteem for the merit of M. le Grande, where he forms his conjectures from his own opinion, and I also have a due deference to that learned Order the Jesuits; it is to their labours that learning in general, and geography in particular, has been more indebted than to those of any other set of men whatever. Yet still I can never believe, either that Gojam is Meroe, or that there is any difficulty in finding its true situation, or that the ancients have written confusedly about it. On the contrary, I find it described by its latitude, its distance from places known, the produce of its soil, colour of its inhabitants, and several other circumstances which peculiarly belong to it, with greater accuracy and precision than many other disputed situations.

I shall begin by giving my reasons why Gojam is

not Meroe: and first, Diodorus * tells us, this island had its name from a sister of Cambyses, king of Persia, who died there in the expedition that prince had undertaken against Ethiopia. Now Cambyses's army perished in the desert, immediately to the southward, after he had passed Meroe, consequently he never was in Gojam, nor within 200 miles of it; his sister, therefore, could not have died there, nor would his army have perished with hunger, if he had arrived in Gojam, or near it, for he would then have been in one of the most plentiful countries in the world.

The next reason to prove that Gojam is not Meroe, is, that that island was inclosed between the Astaboras and the Nile, but Gojam is surrounded entirely by the Nile; there is no other river than it that can, or ever did, pass for the Astaboras, whose situation was distant, and which, retaining its ancient name, cannot be mistaken, for it is at this day called Atbara. Again, as the ancients knew Meroe, if Gojam had been Meroe, they must have known the fountains of the Nile; and this we are sure they did not.

On the other hand, Pliny says Meroe, the most considerable of all the islands of the Nile, is called Astaboras, from the name of its left channel—"*Circa clarissimam earum Meroen, Astabores lævo alveo dictus* †;" which cannot describe any other place than the confluence of those two rivers, the Nile and Atabara. The same author says farther, that the sun is vertical twice a-year, once when, proceeding northward, he enters into the 18th degree, Taurus, and after returning southward into the 14th degree of the Lion: Lucan says the same.

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* Diod. Sicul. Bibliothec. lib. i. p. 20.
† Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

Late tibi gurgite rupto
Ambitur nigris Meroe fæcunda colonis,
Læta comis hebeni; quæ quamvis arbore multa
Frondeat, æstatem nulla sibi mitigat umbra;
Linea tum rectum mundi ferit illa Leonem.

Now Gojam being in lat. 10°, could never answer this description.

But there are in these lines two circumstances which are peculiar to the peninsula of Atbara, or Meroe, and described as such by the poet. The first is, the inhabitants of Meroe were black, such were the Gymnosophists, the first philosophers and inhabitants of this island, and such they have ever been down to the Saracen conquest. On the other hand, nobody will pretend to say that the people of Gojam are black; they are long-haired, and of as fair a complexion as other Abyssinians: nor was it ever supposed that they had philosopers or science among them before the Jesuits arrived in the country.

The next circumstance, peculiar to Meroe, is, that the ebony-tree grew there, which is spread all over the peninsula of Atbara, and out of it this tree is not found (as far as I know,) unless a few trees in the province of Kuara, in the low and northermost part of it; a country, for its intolerable heat, not inferior to that of Atbara, and contiguous to it; but in Gojam, a country deluged with six months rain, this tree would not grow; though so much farther south it is near two English miles higher than Atbara, and is therefore too cold. Such are my reasons for believing that Gojam cannot be Meroe. In my return through the desert I shall confirm this, by proving that Atbara is Meroe, and that we are to look for it about lat. 16° 29′, near the end of the tropical rains.

The Nile, now united with the Astaboras, takes its

course straight north for more than two degrees of the meridian; it then makes a very unexpected turn W. by S. considerably more than that space in longitude, winding very little till it arrives at Korti, the first town in the Barabra, or kingdom of Dongola. The river by this time, with three sides, inclosing the great deserts of Bahiouda, the road through this from Dereira to Korti (before it was cut off by the Arabs, as it now continues to be) made the fourth side of the square which bound this desert; by this route it was that Poncet and the unfortunate M. du Roule went to Abyssinia.

From Korti the Nile runs almost north-west where it passes Dongola, a country of the Shepherds, called also Beja, the capital of Barabra, and comes to Moscho, a considerable town, and welcome place of refreshment to the weary traveller, when the caravans were suffered to pass from Egypt into Ethiopia, who, after traversing the dreary desert of Selima for near 500 miles, found himself at Moscho, in repose, in the enjoyment of plenty of fresh water, long ago become to him an indulgence more delicious than ever he had before conceived. From Moscho the Nile turns gradually to the N. E. and in lat. 22° 15′ it meets with a chain of mountains, and throws itself over them down a cataract called Jan Adel*, which is its seventh cataract; and, continuing still N. E. it passes Ibrim and Deir, two small garrisons belonging to Egypt. The fall of the Nile in the country of Kennouss, which forms the eighth cataract, and its course through Egypt, are already described in my voyage up the river.

* The Arabs write this word Janadil.—E.

CHAP. XVI.

Various names of this River—Ancient Opinion concerning the Cause of its Inundation—Real Manner by which it is effected—Remarkable Disposition of the Peninsula of Africa.

It is not to be wondered, that, in the long course the Nile makes from its source to the sea, it should have acquired a different name in every territory, where a different language was spoken; but there is one thing remarkable, that though the name in sound and in letters is really different, yet the signification is the same, and has an obvious reference to the dog-star *.

Among the Agow, a barbarous and idolatrous nation, it is called Gzeir, Geesa †, Seir; the first of these names signifying God; it is also called Abba, or Ab, Father; and by many other terms, which I cannot write, in the language of that nation, whilst, with a fervent and unfeigned devotion, under these, or such-like appellations, they pray to the Nile, or

* This observation on the names of the Nile is not supported with all the evidence we could wish for. Pococke, in his Notes on the Specimen Historiæ Arabum, gives a curious Arabic fable relating to the star el Asheera, the same as the Greek Sirius. The ancient Arabs worshipped two stars of this name, one in the constellation Canis major, the other in the Canicula.—E.

† From a nation of Sungalla of that name, through which it runs, after having passed its source, and taken its course into Nubia.

spirit residing in that river. The next name it receives is when descended into Gojam, where it is called Abay. Foreigners, of all denominations, not acquainted with the language of the country, have, from hearing it stiled Ab, Father, by the Agows, or Abai, imagined its name Abawi, a case of that noun, which, in their ignorance, they have made to signify, the Father.

Ludolf, the only one in the age he lived that had any real knowledge of either the Geez or Amharic, was the first to perceive this. He found that in neither of these languages Abawi could be a nominative, and consequently could not be applied to any thing; and next he as truly found it could not be of the singular number, and, if so, could not signify one river. He stopped, however, as it were, in the very brink of discovery, for he knew there was no writing or letters in Amharic, which were therefore necessarily borrowed from the old and written language Geez; so that all that could be done was, first, attentively to hear the pronunciation of the word in Amharic, and then to write it in Geez characters as nearly conformable to the sound as possible. Now, the name of the river in Amharic is Abay, pronouncing the y open, or like two (i), and the sense of that word so wrote in Geez, as well as Amharic, is "the river that suddenly swells, or overflows, periodically with rain;" than which a more apposite name could never have been invented *.

By the Gongas, on the south of the mountains Dyre and Tegla, who are indigenæ, the river is called

* The old Abyssinian name was Abawi which an Englishman would write Abâw-ee; the word is an adjective and literally signifies "Paternal." My own opinion is, that the noun fulga a river is elliptically understood: Fulga Abawi is the paternal or original river, that which is the origin of the rest. The modern pronunciation of this name is Abâ ee; and so of all similar terminations.—E.

Dahli, and, on the north of these mountains, where the great cataracts are, by the Guba, Nuba, and Shangalla, it is stiled Kowass, both which names signify a watching dog, the Latrator Anubis, or, the Dog-star. In the plain country, between Fazuclo and Sennaar, it is called Nil, which signifies blue; and the Arabs interpret it by the word Azergue, which it keeps as far as Halfaia, or near it, where it joins the White River.

The next name by which the Nile went was Siris; Pliny tells us it was called Siris both before and after it came into Beja. "Nec ante Nilus, quam se totum aquis concordibus rursus junxit. Sic quoque etiamnum Siris, ut ante nominatus per aliquot millia, et in totum Homero Egyptus, aliisque Triton *." This name the Greeks thought was given to it, because of its black colour during the inundation, which mistake presently produced confusion; and we find, according to this idea, the compiler of the Old Testament, (I should suppose Edras, after the captivity) has translated Siris, the black river, by the Hebrew, Shihor; but nobody ever saw the Nile black when it overflowed; and it would be a very strong figure to call it so in Egypt, where it is always white during the whole of the inundation. Had Edras, or whoever it was that followed the Greek interpretation of Siris, viz, black, inquired in Beja what was the origin of this name, they would have there learned it imported the River of the Dog-star, on whose vertical appearance this Nile, or Siris, overflows; and this idolatrous worship, paid to the Nile, was probably part of the reason of the question the prophet Jeremiah asks †, "And what has thou to do in Egypt, to drink the water of Seir? or the water profaned by idolatrous rites?"

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.
† Jerem. chap. ii. ver. xviii.

As for the first, it is only the translation of the word Bahar, applied to the Nile. The inhabitants of the Barabra, to this day, call it Bahar el Nil, or, the Sea of the Nile, in contradistinction to the Red Sea, which they know by no other name But Bahar el Melech, the Salt Sea. The junction of the three great rivers; the Nile, flowing on the west of Meroe; the Tacazze, which washes the east side, and joins the Nile at Maggiran, in lat. 17°; and the Mareb, which falls into this last, something above this junction—gives the name of Triton to the Nile.

More doubt has been raised as to the third name, Ægyptus, which it obtains in Homer, and which, I apprehend, was a very ancient name given it even in Ethiopia. The generality, nay, all interpreters, I may say, imagine, as in that of Siris, that this name was given it in relation to its colour, viz. black; but with this I cannot agree. Egypt, in the Ethiopic, is called y-Gipt agar; and an inhabitant of the country, Gypt, for precisely so it is pronounced, which means the country of ditches, or canals, drawn from the Nile on both sides at right angles with the river; nothing, surely, is more obvious than to write y Gipt, so pronouncing Egypt, and, with its termination, us, or os, Egyptus. The Nile is also called Kronides, Jupiter; as also several other names; but these are rather the epithets of poets, relative and transitory, not the permanent appellation of the river.

I would pass over another name, that of Geon, which some of the fathers of the church have fondly given it, pretending it was one of the rivers that came from the terrestrial paradise, and encompassed the whole land of Cush, whilst, for this purpose, they bring it two thousand miles by a series of miracles, as it were, under the earth and under the sea: To do what? to surround the whole land of Cush. And does it surround it, or does it surround any land

whatever? This, and some similar wonders told by St Augustine, have been eagerly catched at, and quoted by unbelieving sceptics; meaning to insinuate, that no better, in other respects, was the authority of these fathers when they explain and defend the truth of Christianity. For my own part, though perfectly a friend to free and temperate inquiry, these injudicious arguments, which I need not quote, have little weight with me. St Augustine, when explaining those truths, was undoubtedly under the direction of that spirit which could not lie, and was promised to the priesthood while occupied in their master's commission, the propagation of Christian knowledge; but when, from vanity and human frailty, he attempted to establish things he had nothing to do with, speaking no longer by commandment, he reasoned like a mere man, misled by vanity and too great confidence in his own understanding.

We come now to investigate the reason of the inundation of the Nile, which, being once explained, I cannot help thinking that all further inquiries concerning this subject are superfluous.

It is an observation that holds good through all the works of Providence, That although God, in the beginning, gave an instance of his almighty power, by creating the world out of nothing with one single fiat, yet, in the laws he has laid down for the maintaining order and regularity in the details of his creation, he has invariably produced all these effects by the least degree of power possible, and by those means that seem most obvious to human conception. But it seemed, however, not according to the tenor of his ways and wisdom, to create a country like Egypt, without springs, or even dews, and subject it to a nearly vertical sun, that he might save it by so extraordinary an intervention as was the annual inunda-

tion and make it the most fertile spot of the universe.

This violent effort seemed to be too great, above all proportion, for the end for which it was intended, and the cause was therefore thought to merit the application of the sublimest philosophy; and accordingly, as Diodorus Siculus * tells us, it became the study of the most learned men of the first ages; the principal of whom, with their opinions, he quotes, and at the same time alleges the reason why they were not universally received. The first is Thales of Miletus, one of the seven sages, who assigns for the cause the Etesian winds, which, blowing all the hot season from the Mediterranean, in contrary direction to the stream of the river, force the Nile to accumulate, by obstructing its flowing to the sea, occasion it to rise above its banks, and consequently to overflow the country.

But to this it was answered, That, were this the cause, all rivers running in a northern direction to the sea, would be subject to the same accident; and this it was known they were not. And we may further add, that were this really the cause, the inundation of the Nile would be very irregular; for the winds at this season often blow from the south-west for two or three days together, and then the inundation would be interrupted. To this it must be added, that a very considerable part of Egypt, and that the most fertile, the Delta, is under the dominion of variable winds, which last long, from one point, at no time.

I shall trespass upon my reader's patience, on this head, by no more than one additional observation. If the Etesian winds, by opposing the stream, occasioned the inundation, they could effect this no longer than

* Diod. Sic. lib. i.

they continued to blow. Now, it was an observation we made when on the Nile, and it was almost without exception, that as often as the Etesian winds blew throughout the day, the night was either calm, or the wind blew gently from the south or east, so that it is morally impossible the river could have overflowed at all, without a much more powerful and constant agent than the Etesian winds:

——— Zephyrus quoque vana vetustas
Iis adscripsit aquis.———

LUCAN.

Vain, indeed! A philosopher of the present age would be thought mad who should rely on a system so contrary to experiment and observation; though Thales, the propagator of this now mentioned, was so highly esteemed for his knowledge.

The next opinion quoted is that of Anaxagoras, who attributes the inundation of the Nile to snow melting in Ethiopia; and this Diodorus contradicts for a very substantial reason, that there is no snow in Ethiopia to melt. But supposing all the mountainous part of Ethiopia north of the Line, that is all Abyssinia, was covered with snow, then the inundation must happen in other months, as it must begin in January; for the sun being then within few degrees of being vertical, it must have been the very height of flood when the sun passed over that country in April; whereas, its increase is not discerned till about June, when the sun has left the zenith of all Abyssinia, having then passed over Nubia, and is standing vertical to Syene, or as far to the northward as it can proceed.

It is not my meaning to maintain that there never was snow in Abyssinia, as climates have wonderfully changed. In Cæsar's time, the greatest rivers in Gaul almost every year were frozen over for months, so that armed nations, with their families, cattle, and

incumbrances, passed regularly over them upon the ice without fear; an event that happens not now once in a century. In Prussia* also were found white bears, an animal now confined to the severest snowy regions of the north; and, what comes still nearer to the present subject, in the inscription found in Abyssinia by Cosmas Indoplaustes, Ptolomæus Evergetes, speaking there, in the first person, of his own conquests in Ethiopia, says, that he had passed the river Siris, and had entered the kingdom of Samen, a country intolerable on account of cold and deep snow.

This account I think almost incredible. Ptolemy parted from Egypt, his fleet coasting along the Red Sea, opposite to his army, and carrying provisions for it; we know, moreover, the time his ships sailed, the beginning of June, when the Nile was overflowed, and consequently of great utility to his army on the first part of his expedition, while he was in Egypt and part of Nubia. Now, supposing him to pass the desert as quickly as possible, and come to Axum, it must have been then summer, or near it; and as it was necessary his fleet should return by the monsoon in October, so it must have then rained continually, and the sun been perpendicular to the country when he found the deep snows in Samen, which is not very probable. The river Tacazze, moreover, which Ptolemy crossed, was really not passable at that time, and no Abyssinian army did ever attempt it during a flood, though without scruple at all seasons they cross the Nile, when most deep and rapid.

I remember that when I first ascended Lamalmon, the highest mountain of that ridge, running the whole length of the province of Samen, it was in the depth

* Pausanias Arcad. chap. xvii.

of winter; the thermometer stood at 32°, wind north-west, clear and cold, but attended with only hoar frost, though at that height, and at that season; the grass scarcely was discoloured, and only felt crisp below my feet, with this small degree of freezing; but this vanished into dew after a quarter of an hour's sun, nor did I ever see any sign of congelation upon the water, however shaded and stagnant, upon the top of that, or any other hill. I have seen hail indeed lie for three hours in the forenoon upon the mountains of Amid amid.

The opinion of Democritus was, that the overflowing of the Nile was owing to the sun's attraction of snowy vapour from the frozen mountains of the north, which being carried by the wind southward, and thawed by warmer climates, fell down upon Ethiopia in deluges of rain: and the same is advanced by Agatharcides of Cnidus in his Periplus of the Red Sea. This opinion of Democritus, Diodorus attempts to refute; but we shall not join him in his refutation, because we are now perfectly certain, from observation, that Democritus and Agatharcides, both of them, had fallen upon the true causes of the inundation.

I shall now mention a treatise of a modern philosopher, wrote expressly upon this subject; I mean a discourse on the causes of the inundation of the Nile, by M. de la Chambre, printed at Paris in quarto, 1665, where, in a long dedication, he modestly assures the king, he is persuaded that his majesty will consider, as one of the glories of his reign, the discovery of the true cause of the Nile's inundation, which he had then made, after it had baffled the inquiry of all philosophers for the space of 2000 years; and, indeed, the cause and the discovery would have been both very remarkable, had they been attended with the least degree of possibility. M. de la Chambre says, that the

nitre, with which the ground in Egypt is impregnated, ferments like a kind of paste, occasioning the Nile to ferment likewise, and thus increases the mass of water so much, that it spreads over the whole land of Egypt.

Far be it from me to bear hard upon those attempts with which the ancients endeavoured to solve those phænomena, when, for want of a sufficient progress in experimental philosophy and observation, they were generally destitute of the proper means; but there is no excuse for a man's either believing or writing, that earth, impregnated with so small a quantity of any mixture as not to be discernible to the eye, smell, or taste, could periodically swell the waters of a river, then almost dry, to such an immensity, as to cover the whole plains of Egypt, and discharge millions of tons every day into the sea, at the same time that it contributed to the health of the people and the fertility of the land. It puts me in mind of an assertion of M. de Maillet, almost as absurd as de la Chambre's treatise, that the Nile, which in Egypt is the only fountain of pleasure, of health, and plenty, has a mixture of one-tenth of mud during the time of the inundation: a pleasant and wholesome stream, truly, to which Fleet-ditch would be Hippocrene!

But whatever were the conjectures of the dreamers of antiquity, modern travellers and philosophers, describing without system or prejudice what their eyes saw, have found, that the inundation of Egypt has been effected by natural means, perfectly consonant with the ordinary rules of Providence, and the laws given for the government of the rest of the universe. They have found that the plentiful fall of the tropical rains, produced every year at the same time, by the action of a violent sun, has been uniformly, without

miracle, the cause of Egypt being regularly overflowed.

The sun being nearly stationary for some days in the tropic of Capricorn, the air there becomes so much rarified, that the heavier winds, charged with watery particles, rush in upon it from the Atlantic on the west, and from the Indian Ocean on the east. The south wind, moreover, loaded with heavy vapour, condensed in that high ridge of mountains not far south of the Line, which forms a spine to the peninsula of Africa, and, running northward with the other two, furnishes wherewithal to restore the equilibrium.

The sun, having thus gathered such a quantity of vapours as it were to a focus, now puts them in motion, and drawing them after it in its rapid progress northward, on the 7th of January, for two years together, seemed to have extended his power to the atmosphere of Gondar, when, for the first time, there appeared in the sky white, dappled, thin clouds, the sun being then distant 34° from the zenith, without any one cloudy or dark speck having been seen for several months before. Advancing to the Line with increased velocity, and describing larger spirals, the sun brings on a few drops of rain at Gondar the 1st of March, being then distant 5° from the zenith; these are greedily absorbed by the thirsty soil, and this seems to be the farthest extent of the sun's influence, capable of causing rain, which then only falls in large drops, and lasts but a few minutes: the rainy season, however, begins most seriously upon its arrival at the zenith of every place, and these rains continue constant and increasing after he has passed it, in his progress northward. Before this, green boughs and leaves appear floating in the Bhar-el-Abiad, and shew that, in the latitude where it rises, the rains are already abundant. The Galla, who inhabit, or have passed that river,

give an account of its situation, which lies, as far as I could ever calculate, about 5° from the Line.

In April, all the rivers in Amhara, Begemder, and Lasta, first discoloured, and then beginning to swell, join the Nile in the several parts of its course nearest them; the river then, from the height of its angle of inclination, forces itself through the stagnant lake, without mixing with it. In the beginning of May, hundreds of streams pour themselves from Gojam, Damot, Maitsha, and Dembea, into the lake Tzana, which had become low by intense evaporations, but now begins to fill insensibly, and contributes a large quantity of water to the Nile, before it falls down the cataract of Alata. In the beginning of June, the sun having now passed all Abyssinia, the rivers there are all full, and then is the time of the greatest rains in Abyssinia, while it is for some days, as it were, stationary in the tropic of Cancer.

These rains are collected by the four great rivers in Abyssinia; the Mareb, the Bowiha, Tacazze, and the Nile. All these principal, and their tributary streams, would, however, be absorbed, nor be able to pass the burning deserts, or find their way into Egypt, were it not for the White River, which, rising in a country of almost perpetual rain, joins to it a never-failing stream, equal to the Nile itself.

In the first days of May, the sun, in his way to the northern tropic, is vertical over the small village of Gerri, the limit of the tropical rains. Not all the influence of the sun, which has already past its zenith, and for many days has been as it were stationary, within a few degrees of it over Syene, in the tropic of Cancer, can bring them one inch farther to the northward, neither do any dews fall there, as might be reasonably expected from the quantity of fresh and exhalable water that is then running in the Nile, though it

passes close by that village, and after, through that wild and dreary desert. The fact is certain, and surely curious; the cause, perhaps, unknown, although it may be guessed at.

I conceive, that mountains are necessary to occasion either rain, or dew, by arresting and stopping the great quantity of vapour which is here driven southward before the Etesian winds. Now, all that country between Gerri and Syene is flat and desert, so that this interruption is wanting; and it is owing to the same cause, that the bounds of the tropical rains do stop farther to the southward as you travel westward, and in place of lat. 16°, which is their limits at Gerri, they are confined within lat. 14 in that part of the kingdom of Sennaar, which lies south and west of that capital, where all is free from mountains till you come to those of Kuara and Fazuclo.

Yet, although the sun's influence when at its greatest, is not strong enough to draw the boundaries of the summer's rain farther north than Gerri, all the time that it is in the tropic of Cancer at its greatest distance, these rains are then at their heaviest throughout all Abyssinia; and Egypt, and all its labours would soon be swept into the Mediterranean, did not the sun now begin to change its sphere of action by hastening its progress southward.

From Syene the sun passes over the desert, and arrives at Gerri; here he reverses the effects his influence had when on his passage northward; for whereas, in his whole course of declination northward, from the Line to Gerri, he brought on the rains at every place where he became vertical, so now he cuts off those rains the instant he returns to the zenith of each of those places passing over Abyssinia in his journey southward, till arrived at the line, in the autumnal equinox, his influence ceases on the side of Abyssinia,

again clears with a wind at north, and is always disagreeably cold when the thermometer is below 63°.

The second thing remarkable is the variation of the thermometer; when the sun is in the southern tropic, 36 degrees distant from the zenith of Gondar, it is seldom lower than 72 degrees; but it falls to 60 and 59 when the sun is immediately vertical; so happily does the approach of rain compensate the heat of a too-scorching sun.

The third is, that remarkable stop in the extent of the rains northward, when the sun, that has conducted the vapours from the Line, and should seem, now more than ever, to be in possession of them, is here over-ruled suddenly, till, on his return to the zenith of Gerri, it again resumes the absolute command over the rain, and reconducts it to the Line to furnish distant deluges to the southward.

I cannot omit observing here the particular disposition of this peninsula of Africa; supposing a meridian line, drawn through the Cape of Good Hope, till it meets the Mediterranean where it bounds Egypt, and that this meridian has a portion of latitude that will comprehend all Abyssinia, Nubia, and Egypt, below it, this section of the continent, from south to north, contains 64 degrees divided equally by the equator, so that, from the Line to the southmost point of Africa, is 32 degrees; and northward, to the edge of the Mediterranean, is 32 also: now, if on each side we set off 2 degrees, these are the limits of the variable winds, and we have then 30 degrees south, and 30 north, within which space, on both sides, the trade-winds are confined; set off again 16 degrees from the 32, that is, half the distance between the Cape of Good Hope and the Line, and 16 degrees between the Line and the Mediterranean, and you have the limits of the tro-

pical rains, 16 degrees on each side of the equator: again, take half of 16 degrees, which is 8, and add it to the limit of the tropical rains, that is to 16 degrees, and you have 24, which is the situation of the tropics. There is something very remarkable in this disposition.

CHAP. XVI.

Egypt not the Gift of the Nile—Ancient Opinion refuted—Modern Opinion contrary to Proof and Experience.

It is here we should discuss a question often agitated, whether Egypt owed its existence to the Nile, and whether it was formerly an arm of the sea, but in process of time, being filled up by the quantity of mud which the Nile deposited in its inundation, it at length became firm land, above the surface of the waters? I believe this is the general opinion, as well of the books, as of the greatest part of travellers of the present age; it therefore merits examination, whether it is founded in fact and observation, or whether it is to be ranked among the old and ill-supported traditions fancifully now again brought into fashion.

Egypt is a valley, bounded on the right and left by very rugged mountains; it must, therefore, occur to any one, that the Nile, being a torrent falling from very high ground in Ethiopia, were this valley concave, the violent rapidity, or motion, would be much likelier to carry away mud and soil, than to leave it behind in a state to accumulate.

The land of Egypt slopes gently from the middle of the valley to the foot of the mountains on each side,

so that the centre is really the highest part of the valley; and in the middle of this runs the Nile *. At right angles with the stream large trenches are cut to the foot of the mountains, in which canals the water enters, and insensibly flows down to the end of these trenches, where it diffuses itself over the level ground.

As the river swells, these canals fill with water, which goes seeking a level to the foot of the mountains; so that now the flood, which begins to restagnate towards the bank of the river, acquires no motion, as the calishes are formed at right angles to the stream. Sometimes, indeed, the river is so high, when the rains in Ethiopia are excessive, that the back-water joins the current of the Nile, when immediately it communicates its motion to the stagnant water, and sweeps away every thing that is planted into the sea. It is a mistake, then, to assert,—the fuller the Nile, the better for Egypt.

It has been said by various authors, that it was necessary Egypt should be measured every year, on account of the quantity of mud which the Nile brought down by its inundation, which so covered the landmarks, that no proprietor knew or could discover the limits of his own farm, and that this annual necessity first gave rise to the science of geometry †. How or when geometry was first known and practised, is not my business in this place to inquire, though I think the origin here given is a very probable one. The land of Egypt was certainly measured annually: it is as certainly so at this very time; and if so, the present reason for this is probably the very one which first gave rise to it; but that this is not owing to the mud of the

* See this figure in Dr Shaw, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 385.

† Herod. lib. ii. p. 127. sect. 109.

Nile will appear on the slightest consideration; for if Egypt increase a foot in height in a hundred years, one year's increase of soil could be but the one-hundredth part of a foot, which could hide no land-mark whatever; and we see to this day those in Egypt were huge blocks of granite, often with gigantic heads at the end of them; which the Nile, at the rate Herodotus fixes, of a foot in a hundred years, as being added to the soil, would not cover in several thousand years.

It is absurd to suppose that the Nile is to bring down an equal quantiy of soil every year from the mountains of Abyssinia; whatever was the case at first when this river began to flow, we are sure now, that almost every river and brook in Abyssinia runs in a bed of hard stone, the earth having been long removed; and the rivers now cannot furnish from their rocky beds what they first did from their earthy bottoms, when Egypt was supposed, according to Herodotus, to have its foundation laid in the floods; and therefore, on the first consideration, this annual and equal increase must be impossible.

At Basboch, before the Nile enters Sennaar, I made several hundred trials upon its sediment, as it then came down from the cultivated country of Abyssinia; I thereby found this sediment surprisingly small, being a mixture of fat earth, and a small quantity of sand. At the junction of the Nile and Astaboras I did the same, taking up the water from the middle of the stream, and, having evaporated it afterwards, I found little more sediment than at Sennaar; the water was indeed whiter, and the greatest part of the sediment was sand. I repeated this experiment at Syene with the utmost attention, where the Nile leaves Nubia, and enters Egypt, and I found the quantity of sediment fully nine times increased from what it was at Sennaar, and in it only a trifle of black earth, all the rest being

sand. The experiment at Rosetto was not so often repeated as the others; but the result was, that, in the strength of the inundation, the sediment consisted mostly of sand, and towards the end, was much the greater part of earth. I think these experiments conclusive, as neither the Nile, coming fresh from Abyssinia, nor the Atbara, though joined by the Mareb, likewise from the same country, brought any great quantity of soil from thence.

It was at Syene that the water should have been most charged with mud, for all the accession it was to bring to Egypt was then in its stream; but there the chief part of the sediment was sand, fanned and ventilated with perpetual hot winds, and spread on the surface of the burning desert, never refreshed with the dew of heaven. In that dreary desert, between Gooz and Syene, we saw huge pillars of this light sand; their base in the earth, and heads in the clouds, crossing the wide expanse in various directions, and, upon its becoming calm in the evening, falling to pieces, and burying themselves in the Nile, with whose stream they mixed like an impalpable powder, and were hurried down the river, to compose the many sandy islands we see in the course of it.

It seems to be an established fact, that water of every sort, fresh and salt, that of rivers, and what is stagnant, has from early times sensibly diminished through the whole world; if then the land of Egypt has been continually rising every year, while the quantity of water that was to cover it has become less, or at least not increased, dearth in these latter years must have been frequent in Egypt, for want of the Nile's rising to a proper height; but this is so far from being the case, that, in these last 34 years *, there has

* Several Arabian MSS. attest this.

not been one season of scarcity from the lowness of the Nile, although the rise having been two great, and the waters too abundant, have thrice in that time occasioned famine, by carrying away the millet.

If the land of Egypt increased (as Herodotus says) one foot in 100 years, this addition must have appeared in the most ancient public monuments. Now, the very base of all the obelisks in Upper Egypt are bare and visible, and even the paved plain, laid visibly on purpose to receive the Gnomonical shade, is not covered, nor scarcely out of its level, and these small deviations are apparently owing to the falling of neighbouring buildings. There are in the plain, immediately before Thebes, two Colossal statues*, obviously designed for Nilometers, covered with hieroglyphics, as well as more modern inscriptions: these statues are uncovered to the lowest part of their base; whereas we should have now been walking on ground nearly equal in height to their heads. The same may be said of every public monument, if there had been any truth in the surface of Egypt increasing a foot in a hundred years.

It appears, at least as far back as Hadrian's time, that if the pechus of the Greeks be the peek of the present Egyptians, the same quantity of water overflowed Egypt as now.

The advocates for the supposed increase of the land of Egypt of a foot in a 100 years, pressed by this observation, which they cannot contradict, have chosen to evade it, by supposing, without foundation, that a smaller measure of the Nile's increase had been introduced by the Saracens to obviate the Nile's scantiness; and this has landed them in a palpable absurdity;

* Shaamy and Taamy, of whom we have already spoken.

for, while the Nile failed, the introduction of a lesser measure would not have increased the crop; and, if the quantity of grain had been exacted when it was not produced, this would have only doubled the distress, and made it more apparent; this would never have occasioned the joyful cry, *H'afúa Ullah*, God has given us our desire, *men Jibbel alla Jibbel*, the Nile has overflowed, from the mountains on one side of the valley to the mountains on the other. Besides, there is no country in the world, perhaps, but where this trick may be played with impunity, except in Egypt, for a reason that I am about to explain.

The extension of the land of Egypt northward, the distance between it and Cyprus, and the situation of Canopus, all shew, that no, or very little, alteration has been made these 3000 years. Dr Shaw, and the other writers, who are advocates for what has been advanced by Herodotus *, that Egypt hath been produced by the Nile, have deserted this ground of maintaining their hypothesis, and have recourse to the Nilometer to prove, that the soil has increased in height, and that a greater quantity of water is necessary now to overflow the land of Egypt than was required in the days of Homer.

If the first part of their assertion can be proved, I shall make no sort of difficulty of giving up the other. But I rather conceive, that none of those who have written upon this subject hitherto, whatever degree of learning and information they may have possessed, have possessed sufficient data to explain this subject intelligibly. It seems, indeed, to have remained, with

* Herod. Lut. sect. 4, 5. Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 101. Arist. Meteorol. lib. i. cap 14.

the source of the river, a secret reserved for latter times.

It will be necessary for us first to consider, what the use of a Nilometer was; for what cause it was made; and by whom.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that, in every state or society, the product or revenue should be known, as well as what will be wanted for the supply of the necessities of the people. Now, it was only the ground overflowed by the Nile, that could produce grain for the subsistence of the inhabitants and revenue of the state.

The first consideration, then, was, to know how much of the land of Egypt was overflowed in a given term of years, and how much grain was produced upon that average. This could only be ascertained by measuring, and they, therefore, settled with precision the land that was overflowed from the earliest times, and do so to this day. These actual measurements gave them a *maximum* and a *minimum*, which furnished them with a mean, and thus they were in possession of all the principles necessary for making a Nilometer, by dividing a pillar into corresponding cubits, and divisions of cubits called digits, placing it also firm and perpendicular, so as to be liable to no alteration or injury, though in the middle of the stream.

The first stated measure was certainly that mentioned in scripture, the cubit, *secundum cubitum virilis manus*, measuring from the center of the round bone in the elbow to the point of the middle finger *. This is still the measure of all unpolished nations; but no medium or term, expressive of its exact contents, ha-

* Deut. chap. iii. ver. 11.

ving been applied, writers have differed as to the length of this cubit, and no standard existing to which it might be referred, a great deal of confusion has thereupon followed. Dr Arbuthnot * says, that there are two cubits in scripture, the one, 1 foot 9 inches and $\frac{1000}{1000}$ parts of an inch, according to our measure, being the 4th part of a fathom, twice the span, and six times the palm. The other is equal to 1 foot $\frac{1824}{1000}$ parts of a foot, or the 400dth part of a stadium. I shall not inquire into the grounds he goes on; I believe, however, that neither are precisely the ancient cubit of the east, but that both are too large; at least the Egyptian I found to be very exactly 1 foot 5 3-5th inches, which is 2 inches more than father Mersenne † has made his Hebrew cubit. But this is of less consequence to us now, because Herodotus ‡ informs us, that in his time, and probably at the first institution of the Nilometer, the measure was the Samian cubit, which is about 18 inches English, or half an inch less than the ancient cubit.

The reader will then consider, that the divisions of this Nilometer were a representation of certain facts: That the Nile's reaching to such a division corresponded to a certain quantity of corn that was sown, a proportion of the produce of which was to be paid to the king, the rest to go to the landlord and the labourer.

The Nilometer then ascertained the contract between king and people on these terms; That, in the event of so much corn being produced by the land of Egypt, such a tribute was to be paid: But, in case a certain quantity of ground, less than that, was over-

* Encyclop. voce Cubit.
† Vide Encyclop. voce Cubit.
‡ Herod. lib. ii. sect. 168. p. 149.

flowed, or, which is the same thing, a lesser quantity of grain was produced, then the king was not to exact his tribute, because it was understood such a quantity only was produced as was sufficient for the maintenance of the landholder and labourer. This was referred to the Nilometer, whose division shewed to what height the Nile had risen. Men appointed by the sovereign were to superintend this Nilometer, and to publish the height of the Nile, whilst the reason why the king was to have the direction of the Nilometer, and not his subjects, was very obvious, though it has not yet been understood, because the king could not gain by substituting false measures, whereas the people might.

The Nile, though in an average of years it brought down nearly the same quantity of water, yet, in particular ones, it varied sometimes more and sometimes less. It is likewise observed, like most other rivers, to run more on one side of the valley for some years than to the other. The consequence of this varying and deviation was, that though, upon the whole, the quantity indicated by the Nilometer was the same, yet nobody knew his *quota*, or what proportion of the whole was drawn from the property of each individual, as for this they were obliged to apply to actual mensuration. Supposing a man's property was a section of the land of Egypt, of 12,000 feet, from the brink of the river to the mountain, and of any given breadth; 4000 feet of this perhaps were overflowed, whilst the other 8000 remained dry, and above the level of the water. The tenant, after having measured, did not till then know what his farm of 12,000 feet would give him for that year, only 4000 of which had been overflowed by the water, and was then fit for sowing; for this he paid his landlord the highest rent laid upon cultivated land. But the 8000 feet that still remained

were not equally useless, though not overflowed by the inundation; for 4000 of the 8000, which lay by the bank of the river, could be overflowed by machines, and by the labour of man, when, for a certain time, the river was high enough to be within reach of machinery; so that the value of this 4000 feet to the farmer, was equal to the first, *minus* the expence and trouble it cost him for watering it by labour; for this, then, he paid one half of the rent only to the landlord.

Now, though it was known, that the whole farm was 12,000 feet, yet, till it was measured, no one could say how much of that would be overflowed by the Nile alone, and so manured without expence; how much was to be watered by labour, and so pay half rent; and how much was to be incapable of any such calculation, and for that year equally useless to landlord and tenant. I speak not of a fact that happened in antiquity, but one that is necessary, and in practice at this very hour; and though a man, by this mensuration, attains to the knowledge of what his farm produces this same year, this is no general rule for futurity, as his cultivated land next year may be doubled, or perhaps reduced to one-fourth; and his neighbour, on the other side of the Nile, may in his farm make up the corresponding deficiency, or excess; and the average quantity produced by them, both being the same, the degree of the Nilometer will be the same likewise.

From this it is obvious to infer, that there are two points of great advantage to the tenant: The one is, when it is just high enough to pay the meery*, for then he has all the harvest to himself, and pays no-

* The king's yearly land-tax, or rent.

thing, though he has very near the same quantity as if he was subject to the tax; the other is, when near the whole of these 12,000 feet is overflowed by the Nile, but before the water is in contact with the current of the river; for then, though he is liable to pay the meery, he has sown the greatest part of his land possible, without additional labour or expence; more than this is loss; for then the water of the inundation is put likewise in motion, and all the floating pulverised earth, that has been trod into an impalpable powder, during March, April, and May, is swept away by the current into the sea, and nothing left but a bare, cold, hard till, which produces little, and is not easily pulverised by the poor instruments of husbandry there in use, when neither farmer nor landholder pays any thing, because, indeed, there is not any receipt.

However, from this uncertainty one thing arises, which does not seem to have been understood; for the tenant, not knowing precisely the quantity of seed that he may want, comes to his farm unprovided, and, being uncertain of its produce, takes his land only from year to year; the landlord furnishes him with seed *, and even with all labouring utensils.

And here I am to explain what I have before advanced, what to some will appear a paradox, That the substituting false measures in the Nilometer, by the sovereign, is absolutely impracticable. Supposing the height of the Nilometer, when at 8 cubits, shewed that there was just corn enough to maintain the inhabitants, and that the tenant knew, by the quantity of land measured, that he had barely what was to pay his rent and support his family; this he must know before he sowed, because he measured immediately af-

* Gen. chap. xlvii. ver. 20 and 23.

ter the inundation; and this he must know likewise by the corn he borrows for seed from his landlord, who, as I have said, furnishes his tenant both with seed and labouring utensils. If, then, he finds he can barely maintain himself, and not pay his rent, upon the proclamation at the Nilometer, he deserts his farm, and neither ploughs nor sows*, but flies to Palestine, to the Arabs, or into the cities, and brings famine along with him. The next year there is a plague, and sweeps all those poor wretches, in a bad state of health, by living upon bad food, into their graves, so that the introduction of a supposed false measure, directly advanced by Dr Shaw †, and often alluded to by others, but always without possibility of foundation, is one of the many errors he has fallen into.

He knew nothing but of the Delta, never was in Upper, and no considerable time even in Lower Egypt, but when the Nile had overflowed it, and I suppose, never conversed with a fellah, or Egyptian peasant, in his life. All his *wonders* are in the land of Zoan ‡, and his observations should have reached no further, because they are not fact, but fanciful imaginations of his own; not from any bad intention, but because he never was in the way of being better informed, but determined not to abandon a system he had once formed.

Herodotus § mentions, that in the time of Mœris,

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* This was apparently the reason why Joseph, who had bought not only the lands, but the people of Egypt likewise, transferred them from farms, not convenient for them, to others where they could thrive. The same they do spontaneously at this day, now they are free.

† Dr Shaw, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 383.

‡ Psalm, lxxviii. ver. 12. § Herod. eut. sect. 13.

when the minimum came to be eight Samian cubits, all Egypt below Memphis was overflowed, but that in his days it took sixteen cubits, or at least fifteen, to put the same land in like condition for cultivation; or, in other words, the minimum, when they paid their meery, was sixteen, or at least fifteen, cubits in his time; and the uncertainty of these two terms shows, that there were unaccountable inequalities, even in his days, as we shall find there have been ever since. But I must here beg leave to ask, why we should believe Herodotus knew the management of the Nilometer more than travellers have done since, as he tells us constantly, throughout this part of his history, that when he inquired of the priests concerning the Nile, they would tell him nothing about it * ?

In Mœris's time there were great lakes dug, as Herodotus† declares, to carry off the superfluous water, to what place is not said, but surely into the desert, for the use of the Arabs. Now, unless we knew what time these lakes were opened to receive the stream, we do not know whether it was the evacuation by the lake, or scarcity of the water, that impeded the rise of the Nile upon the Nilometer. We have no account of these transactions, and we shall be less inclined to regret this, when I shall shew, that the Nilometer could be of no use in solving this question at all, either in Herodotus's days, or any time since, without a previous knowledge of several circumstances never yet taken into the calculation, and of which Herodotus must have been equally ignorant with us.

But let us grant that the Nile in Mœris's time rose only eight cubits, and in the days of Herodotus to six-

* Herod. lib. ii. sect. 19.
† Herod. lib. ii. sect. 4. 101. 149.

teen; let us see if, at certain periods afterwards, it kept to any thing like that proportion. Above 400 years after Herodotus, Strabo travelled in Egypt; he went through the whole country, from Alexandria to beyond Syene and the first cataract; and as he is an historian whose character is established, both for veracity and sagacity, we may receive what he says as unexceptionable evidence, especially as he travelled in such company, as it is not probable the priests could have refused him any thing. Now Strabo* says, that, in his days, eight cubits were a minimum, or the wafaa ullah of the Nile's increase; therefore, from Mœris's time to Strabo, there is not an inch difference in the minimum, and this includes the space of 1400 years.

It may be said, indeed, that the passage in Strabo† imports, that, in the time of Petronius, by a particular care of the banks and calishes, the Nile at eight peeks, (or cubits) enabled the Egyptians to pay their meery without hardship; but this was by particular industry, more than what had been in common use, and this, too, I conceive to be Strabo's meaning. But let us compute from Herodotus, who says that sixteen, or at least fifteen, were necessary in his time, whilst Strabo informs us, that, before Petronius exerted himself as to the banks and calishes just mentioned, the extreme abundance must then have been at twelve, and the minimum at ten. Now, by this passage, beyond all exception, it is clear that there could have been no increase indicated by the Nilometer; for ten cubits watered the whole land of Egypt sufficiently in Strabo's time, whereas sixteen and fifteen were necessary

* Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 915.
† Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 915.

in the days of Herodotus: and I must likewise observe, that if we should suppose the same industry and attention used in Mœris's time that was in Petronius's (and there is every reason to induce us to think there was), then the proof is positive, that there was no difference in the soil of Egypt indicated by the Nilometer for the first 400 years.

From this let us descend to Hadrian, about 100 years afterwards. We know from Pliny *, and from an inscription upon a medal of great brass of Hadrian's, who was himself in Egypt, that sixteen cubits were then the fiscal term or rise of the Nile, by which the Egyptians paid their rent; and this is precisely what Herodotus says, in his time, was no more than sufficient.

About the beginning of the 4th century, in the emperor Julian's reign †, fifteen cubits were a sufficient minimum to incur the payment of the tribute; and this is one of the terms that Herodotus fixes upon, as being sufficient to oblige the payment in his days; and the other is sixteen or a cubit more; so that if the Nilometer proves any thing at all, it is this, that presumptively the Nile has never increased from Mœris to Petronius, or in 1400 years, and certainly that, if it has not diminished, it has not increased for 700 years, from Herodotus to the emperor Julian.

Procopius, in his first book, I think, says, that eighteen peeks was too full a Nile, and occasioned dearth by its quantity. But in the middle of the 6th century, he tells us ‡ it required eighteen cubits for a minimum, by which Egypt was to pay the

* Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. vii. Philost. de Icon. Nili.
† Julian. Epist. Edicto Prefecto Ægypti.
‡ Procop. lib. iii. de Reb. Goth.

meery; so that in 100 years, from Julian to Justinian, the minimum had increased three cubits, which was 4½ feet; not one foot in 100 years, as the proposition bears; and this would prove too much, if it was true; but it is impossible.

Thus far, then, we are at liberty to say, that, as long as Egypt was a Greek kingdom, no visible alteration or increase of the soil can be fairly established from history or inspection.

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* The generality of writers, as Mr Bruce has observed, favour the opinion, that the Delta of Egypt is formed by the deposition of the river. Viewing the globe in most alluvial countries, the same thing seems to have taken place. Egyptian tradition favours this conclusion; but it is very vague and unlimited. It reports, that all the country from the point of the Delta, a little below Memphis, and old Cairo, was once a marsh, and that higher Egypt was inhabited long before the other was dried. It likewise affirms, that the Nile then flowed through the desert west of Memphis; and that the river was turned into its present course by stopping the old one above the city. But we know that lower Egypt was inhabited very soon after the deluge; and we cannot enter into the subject, without affecting the truth of the Mosaic history. The Nile, whatever it did in early ages, has produced very little new land during 2000 years.—E.

CHAP. XVII.

The same subject continued—Nilometer, what. How divided and measured.

In the 7th century, Egypt was conquered by an ignorant and barbarous enemy, the Saracens, under Amru Ibn el Aas, the general of Omar, the second Caliph after Mahomet. Omar was a foreigner, conqueror, bigot, and a tyrant; he destroyed the Grecian Nilometer from the same motives of religion which had before moved him to burn the Alexandrian library; and afterwards, with an equal degree of sound judgment, determined to establish his empire at Medina, in the middle of the peninsula of Arabia, a country distant from the sea, without fresh water, and surrounded on all sides with barren sands. But he was nevertheless desirous of feeding his famished Arabs with the wheat of Egypt; and for this purpose he ordered Amru to begin a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, to carry the wheat to the Arabian Gulf, and thence to Yambo, the port of Medina.

Omar thought that a larger tribute was due to put the conquerors a little more upon a footing with the conquered; for Egypt, which had once 20,000 cities, had not then the tenth part of them. Having there-

fore a larger extent to cultivate, with the same quantity of water, it produced more grain; and, at the same time, having fewer people to eat it, nothing was less oppressive than that a part of the surplus of the produce should go in augmentation of the tribute. For this purpose, following the very weak light of his own judgment, he introduced a different measure on the Nilometer, and the consequence of that measure, imposed by a conqueror, without the previous consent or knowledge of the people, affected them so much, that they prepared to fly the country; from which it immediately would have followed, that all Egypt would have lain desolate and uncultivated, and all Arabia been starved.

They were perfectly acquainted with their ancient measure, and it is probable that Omar made an excessive addition by the new Nilometers which he had erected; so that faith being thereby broken between the government and people, the Egyptians set about watching the Nile upon the Nilometer with its new measure, as the only way of being informed when poverty or famine was to overtake them. This being told to Omar, he ordered the new Nilometer to be demolished; but as it had been part of the complaint to him, that their counting the divisions of the Mikeas * was the reason why the people were kept in continual terror, he shut up the access to Christians, a prohibition which continues in Cairo to this day; and, instead of permitting ocular inspection, he ordered the daily increase to be proclaimed, but in a manner so unintelligible, that the Egyptians in general no longer understood it, nor do they understand it now. For, beginning at a given point, which was not the

* Or Nilometer.

bottom of the Nilometer, he went on, telling the increase, by subtracting from the upper division; so that as nobody knew the lower point from which he began, although they might comprehend how much it had risen since the crier proclaimed its increase, yet they never could know the height of the water that was in the Nilometer when the proclamation began, nor what the division was to which it had ascended on the pillar.

To understand this, let us premise, that, on the point of the island Rhoda, between Geeza and Cairo, near the middle of the river, but nearer to Geeza, is a round tower, and in that an apartment, in the middle of which is a very neat well, or cistern, lined with marble, to which the Nile has free access, through a large opening like an embrasure, the bottom of the well being on the same level with the bottom of the river. In the middle of this well rises a thin column, as far as I can remember, or eight faces of blue and white marble, to the foot of which if you are permitted to descend, you are then on the same plane with the foot of the column and bottom of the river. This pillar is divided into 20 peeks, called Draa El Belledy, of 22 inches each *.

The two lowermost peeks are not divided at all, but are left absolutely without mark, to stand for the quantity of sludge the water deposits there, and which occupies the place of water. Two peeks are then divided on the right, four peeks are divided into 24 digits; then, on the right, four; and, on the left, another four: again, four on the right, which complete the number of 18 peeks from the first division marked on the pillar, each of 22 inches. The whole, marked and unmarked, amounts to 36$\frac{1}{2}$ feet English.

* Vid. geometrical elevation and plan of the Mikeas.

On the night of St John, when the Nucta has fallen, that is, when they see the rain-water from Ethiopia is so mixed with the Nile that at Cairo it is become exhalable, and falls down in dews upon the earth, which till that time it never does, they then begin to cry, having five peeks of water marked on the Mikeas, and two unmarked for the sludge, of which they take no notice in the proclamation. Their first proclamation, suppose the Nile has risen 12 digits, is 12 from six, or it wants 12 digits to be six peeks. When it rises three more, it is nine from six, or, Tissa an Sitte; and so it goes on, subtracting the digits from the upper number, without giving you any information what that six is, or that they began to count from five, which I suppose is the assumed depth of the Nile before it begins to increase.

When the river has risen on the Mikeas eight peeks and 23 digits, they then call Wahad am erba Tush, i. e. one from 14, five peeks of water being left marked in the Mikeas, but only eight of augmentation that has risen upon the column, according to the divisions, which makes in all 13 peeks and 23 digits, which wants one from being nine of augmentation; and that being added, they cry Wafaa Ullah, which obliges the country to the payment of the meery. Again, suppose 17 peeks, or cubits, and 23 digits to stand on the column, the cry is Wahad an temen Tush, i. e. one from 18, and, upon this being filled, and the divisions complete by a certain day in August, the next is Ashareen, 20, or, men Jibbel alla Jibbel, from mountain to mountain, that is, 18 peeks marked on the pillar, and two unmarked at the foot of it, supposed to be covered with mud. All the land of Egypt is then fitted for cultivation; the great canal at Mansoura, and several others, are opened, which convey the water into the desert, and hinder any further stagnation on the fields, though there is still a great

part of the water to come from Ethiopia, but which would not drain soon enough to fit the land for tillage, were the inundation suffered to go on.

Now, from these 16 peeks, the Wafaa Ullah, if we deduce 5, which were in the well, and marked on the column when the crier began, there will have been but 11 peeks of rise as a minimum, which still made the meery due, or 15, deducing 5 from 20, the maximum, men Jibbel alla Jibbel, the increase that fits all Egypt for cultivation, more than which is loss and danger. Therefore, suppose the 16 peeks on the medal of Hadrian to have been the minimum or fiscal term, we must infer, that the same quantity of inundation produced the Wafaa Ullah, or payment of the meery, in Hadrian's time, that it does at this day; and consequently the land of Egypt has not increased since his time, that is, in the last 1600 years.

As a summary of the whole relating to this periodical inundation of the Nile, I shall here deliver my opinion, which I think, as it is founded upon ancient history, consonant to that of intermediate times, and invincibly established by modern observation, can never be overturned by any argument whatever. And this I shall do as shortly as possible, lest, having anticipated it in part by reflections explanatory of the narrative, it may at first sight have the appearance of repetition.

It is agreed on all hands, that * Egypt, in early

* Philosophers who direct their attention to the progressive history of the globe, may find in this district many singular phænomena. It is surprising to observe how fully the ancient records of Egypt confirm the opinion which these suggested; but still no conclusion can be formed, which is entirely consistent with all the facts, some of which appear to contradict the rest. The modern systems of geology are well known to favour the opinion contrary to that of the Author; but he may reasonably ask their defenders, "*When* did the Nile form the Delta?"—E.

ages, had water enough to overflow the ground that composed it. It was then a narrow valley as it is now; having been early the seat of the arts, crowded with a multitude of people, enriched by the most flourishing and profitable trade, and its numbers supplied and recruited, when needful, by the immense nations to the southward of it, having grain and all the necessaries and luxuries of life (oil excepted) for the great multitude which it fed, Egypt was averse to any communication with strangers till after the foundation of Alexandria.

The first princes, after the building of Memphis, finding the land turn broader towards the Delta, whereas before it had been a narrow stripe confined between mountains; observing also, that they had great command of water for fitting their land for cultivation, nay, that great part of it ran to waste without profit, which must have been the case, since it is so at this day: observing likewise, that the superabundance of water in the Nile did harm, and that the neighbouring sandy plains of Libya needed nothing but a judicious distribution of that water, to make it equal to the land of Egypt in fertility, and surpass it in the variety of natural productions, applied themselves very early to digging large lakes *, that, preserving a degree of level sufficient, all the year long watered the dry deserts of Libya like so many fruitful showers. Geometry, architecture, and all the mechanic arts of those times, were employed to accomplish those designs. These canals and vast works communicated one with another to imprison the water, and set it again at liberty at proper times.

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* We know that these lakes were dug, and in use as early as Moses's time. Exod. chap. vii. ver. 19. chap. viii. ver. 5.

We may be satisfied this was observed attentively all the time of the dynasties, or reigns of the Egyptian princes. After the accession of the Ptolemies, who were strangers, the multitude of inhabitants had greatly decreased. There was no occasion for works to water lands that were not peopled; so far as they were necessary for cities, gardens, and pleasure-grounds, they were always kept up. The larger and more extensive conduits, dikes, and sluices, though they were not used, were protected by their own solidity and strength from sudden ruin. Egypt, now confined within its ancient narrow valley, had water enough to keep it in culture, and make it still the granary of the inhabited world.

When the splendid race of the Ptolemies ended, a scene of war and confusion, and bad government at home, was succeeded by a worse under foreigners abroad. The number of its inhabitants was still greatly decreased, and the valley had yet a quantity of water enough to fit it for annual culture.

In the reign of the second emperor after the Roman conquest, Petronius Arbiter, a man well known for taste and learning, was governor of Egypt. He saw, with regret, the decay of the magnificent works of the ancient native Egyptian princes. His sagacity penetrated the usefulness and propriety of those works. He saw they had once made Egypt populous and flourishing. Like a good citizen and subject of the state he served, and from a humane and rational attachment to that which he only governed, he hoped to make it again as flourishing under the new government, as it had been under the old. Like a man of sense, and master of his subject, he laughed at the dastardly spirit of the modern Egyptians, anxious and trembling lest the Nile should not overflow land enough to give them bread, when they had the power in their

hands to procure plenty and abundance for six times the number of the people then in Egypt. To shew them this, he repaired their ancient works, raised their banks, refitted their sluices, and by thus imprisoning, as I may say, the inundation at a proper time in the beginning, he overflowed all Egypt with 8 pecks of water, as fully, and as effectually, as to the purposes of agriculture, as before and since with 16; and did not open the sluices to allow the water to run and waste in the desert (where there was now no longer any inhabitants), till the land of the valley of Egypt had been so well watered, as only to need that the inundation should retire in time to leave the farmer the ground firm enough for plowing and for sowing.

Let any one read what I have already quoted from Strabo; it is just what I have here repeated, but in fewer words. Let him consider how fair an experiment this of Petronius was, that, by re-establishing the works of Mœris, and putting the inundation to the same profit that Mœris, did, he found the same quantity of water overflow the same quantity of ground, and consequently that the land of Egypt had not been raised an inch from Mœris's time to that of Petronius, above 1400 years.

Now the second part of the question comes, What difference of measure was made by the Saracens, and how does it now stand, after that period, as to the supposed rise of a foot in a hundred years? It is now above 1100 years since the * first of the Hegira, and near 900 years since the erection of the present Mikeas, which being equal to the period between Mœris and Herodotus, and again to that between Herodotus and Julian, we should begin to be certain if any such

* A. C. 622.

increase in the land has ever, from Mœris to the present time, been indicated by the Nilometer.

The reader will perhaps be surprised at what I am going to advance, That those writers, as well as their supporters, who have pronounced so positively on this subject, have not furnished themselves with the data which are absolutely necessary to solve this question. Quantity is only to be ascertained by measure, yet none of them have settled that only medium of judging. The Mikeas, or pillar, is the subject to be measured; and they are not yet agreed within 20 feet of its extreme height, nor about the division of any part of it. As this accusation appears to be a strong one, I shall set down the proof for the reader's consideration, that it may not be supposed I mean to criticise improperly, or to do any author injustice.

And first of the Mikeas. Mr Thomas Humes, a gentleman quoted by Dr Shaw*, who had been a great many years a factor at Cairo, says, that the Mikeas is 58 feet English in height. Now, there is really no reason why such an enormous pillar should have been built, as the Nile would drown all Cairo before it was to rise to this height; accordingly, as we have seen, its height is not so much by near 22 feet. Dr Perry† next, who has wrote largely upon the subject, says, the Mikeas, or column, is divided into 24 pecks, and each peck, or cubit, is 24 inches nearly. Dr Pococke‡, who travelled at the same time, agrees in the division of 24 pecks, but says that these pecks are unequal. The 16 lower he supposes are 21 inches, the 4 next, 24 inches, and the uppermost, 22. So that

* Shaw's Travels, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 382.
† Descript. of the East, vol. I. p. 256.
‡ A View of the Levant, p. 282, 284, 286.

one of these gentlemen makes the Mikeas 43 feet, which is above six feet more than the truth, and the other 48, which is above 11; besides the second error which Dr Pococke has committed, by saying the divisions are of three different dimensions, when they really are not any one of them what he conceives, nor is the Mikeas divided unequally.

As for Mr Humes, who had lived long at Cairo, I would by no means be thought to insinuate a doubt of his veracity. There may, in change of times, be occasions when Christians may be admitted freely to the Mikeas, and be allowed to measure exactly. This however, must be with a long rod, divided and brought on purpose, with a high stool, or scaffold; and this sort of preparation would be attended with much danger if seen in the hand of a Christian without, and much more if he was to attempt to apply it to the column within. At Cairo a man may see, or hear, any thing he desires, by the ordinary means of gold, which no Turk can withstand, or refuse; but often one villain is paid for being your guide, and another villain, his brother, pays himself, by informing against you; the end is mischief to yourself, which, if you are a stranger, generally involves also your friends. You are asked, What did you at the Mikeas, when you know it is forbidden? and your silence after that question is an acknowledgment of guilt; sentence immediately follows, whatever it may be, and execution upon it.—I rather am inclined to think, that, though several Christians have obtained admission to the Mikeas, very few have had the means, or instruments, and fewer still the courage, to measure this column exactly; which leads me to believe, as Dr Shaw says he procured the number of feet in a letter from Mr Humes, that the doctor has mistaken 53 for 38, which, in a foreign hand, is very easily done; it would then be

38, instead of 58 English feet, and to that number it might approach near enough, and the difference be accounted for, from an awkward manner of measuring with a trembling hand, there being then only a little more than one foot of error.

From what I have just now mentioned, I hope it is sufficiently plain to the reader, that the length and division of the column in the Mikeas, by which the quantity of water, and consequently the increase of the soil, was to be determined, was utterly unknown to those travellers, who had undertaken this mode of determining it.

I shall now inquire, whether they were better instructed in the length of that measure, which, after the Saracen conquest, was introduced into the Nilometer of Geeza, where it has remained unaltered since the year 245? Dr Shaw introduces the consideration of this subject by an enumeration of many different peeks, seven of which he quotes from Arabian authors, as being then in use. First, the Homaræus, one 2-9ths digit of the common cubit. 2. The Hasamean, or greater peek, of 24 digits. 3. The Belalean, less than the Hasamean. 4. The black cubit, less than the Belalean, two 2-3d digits. 5. The Jossippean, 2-3ds of a digit less than the black cubit. 6. The Chord, or Asaba, one 2-3d digit less than the black peek. 7. The Maharanius, two 2-3ds digit less than the black cubit*. Now, I will appeal to any one to what all this information amounts, when I am not told the length of the common peek to which he refers the rest, as being 1½ digit, or 2 digits, more or less.—He himself thinks that the measuring peek is the Stambouline peek; but, then, for computation's sake,

* Shaw, p. 380, 381.

he takes a peck of his own invention, being a medium of 4 or 5 guesses, and fixes it at 25 inches, for which he has no authority but his own imagination.

I will not perplex the reader more with the different measures of these pecks; between the Hasamean and great peak of Kalkasendas, which is eighteen inches, and the black peck, a model of which Dr Bernard * has given us from an Arabic MS. at Oxford, the difference is 10 inches. The first being 18 inches, equal to the Samian Peck, the other 28$\frac{1}{7}$ inches; and from this difference we may judge, joining to the uncertainties of the height and divisions of the Mikeas, how impossible it is for us to determine the increase of 12 inches in the sand in an hundred years.

As the generality of writers have fixed upon the Constantinople, or Stambouline peck, for the measure of the Mikeas, in which choice they have erred, we will next seek what is the measure of the Stambouline peck, and whether they have in this article been better informed.

M. de Maillet, French consul at Cairo, says, that this peck is equal to two French feet, or very nearly 26 inches of our measure: to add another mistake, he states, that by this peck the Mikeas is measured; and, for the completing of the confusion, he asserts, that the Nile must rise 48 French feet before it covers all their lands. What he means by "all their lands" is to very little purpose to inquire; for he would probably have been drowned in his closet, in which he made these computations, long before he had seen the Nile at that height, or near it.

Without, then, wandering longer in this extraordinary confusion, which I have only stated to shew that

* Descript. de l'Egypte, p. 60.

a traveller may differ from Dr Shaw, and yet be right; and that this writer, however learned he may be, cannot, for want of information, be competent to solve this question which he so much insists upon, I shall now, with great submission to the judgment of my reader, endeavour to explain, in as few words as possible, how the real state of the matter stands, and he will then apply it as he pleases.

There was a very ingenious gentleman, whom I met at Cairo, M. Antes, a German by birth, and of the Moravian persuasion, who, both to open to himself more freely an opportunity of propagating his religious tenets, and to gratify his own mechanical turn, rather than from a view of gain, to which all his society are (as he was) perfectly indifferent, exercised the trade of watch-maker at Cairo. This very worthy and sagacious young man was often my unwearied and useful partner in many inquiries and trials, as to the manner of constructing some instruments in the most compendious form, for experiments proposed to be made in my travels. By his assistance, I formed a rod of brass, of half an inch square, and of a thickness which did not easily warp, and would not alter its dimensions unless with a violent heat. Upon the three faces of this brazen rod we traced, with good glasses and dividers, the measures of three different pecks, then the only three known in Cairo, the exact length of which was taken from the standard model furnished me by the Cadi. The first was the Stambouline peck, exactly 26 inches 7-12ths; the second, the Hendaizy, of 24 inches 9-12ths; and the third the peck El Belledy, of 22 inches, all English measure.

It was natural to suppose, that, after knowing, as we do, that no alteration has been made in the Mikeas since the 245th year of the Hegira, that the peck of Constantinople, a foreign measure, was probably then

not known, nor introduced into Egypt; nor, till after the conquest of Sultan Selim, in the year 1516, was it likely to be the peck with which the Mikeas was measured. It did not, as I conceive, exist in the 245th of the Hegira, though, even if it had, its dimensions may have been widely different from those fixed upon by the number of writers whose authority we have quoted, but who do not agree. It was not likely to be the Hendaizy peck either; for this, too, was a foreign measure, originally from the island of Meroë, and well known to the Egyptians in Upper Egypt, but not at all to the Saracens, their present masters. The peck, El Belledy, the measure in common use, and known to all the Egyptians, was the proper cubit to be employed in an operation, which concerned a whole nation, and was, therefore, the measure made use of in the division of the Mikeas; for that column, as I have said, is divided equally into peeks, or drass, called Draa El Belledy, consisting of 22 inches; and each of these peeks is again divided into 24 digits.

A very ingenious author, who treats of the particular circumstances of those times, in his MS. called Han el Mohaderat, says, that the inhabitants of Seide counted 24 peeks on their Nilometer, when there were 18 peeks marked as the rise of the water upon the Mikeas at Rhoda; and this shews perfectly two things: First, That they knew the whole secret of counting there both by the marked and unmarked part of the column; for the peek of the Mikeas being 22 inches English, it was, by consequence, four inches larger each peek than the Samian peek; so that, if, to 20 peeks of Seide, you add twenty times four inches, which is 80, the difference of the two peeks, when divided by 18, gives four, which, added to the 20 peeks on the column, make 24 peeks, the number sought. Secondly, That this observation in the Han el Moha-

derat sufficiently confirms what I have said both of the length of the column and length of the peek; that the former is 20 peeks in height, and that the measure, by which this is ascertained, is the peek El Belledy, of 22 inches, as it appears on the brass rod, four inches longer than the Samian peek, and consequently is not the peek of Stamboul, nor any foreign measure whatever.

A traveller thinks he has attained to a great deal of precision, when, observing 18 peeks on the highest division of the column from its base, or bottom of the well, he finds it 37 feet; he divides this by eighteen, and the quotient is 24 inches; when he should divide it by 20, and the answer would be 22 and a fraction, the true content of the peek El Belledy, or peek of the Mikeas. This erroneous division of his he calls the peek of the Mikeas; and comparing it with what authors, less informed than himself, have said, he names it the Stambouline peek, and then the black peek, when it really is his own peek, the creature of his own error or inadvertence; but, as he does not know this, it is handed down from traveller to traveller, till unfortunately it is adopted by some man of reputation, and it then becomes, as in this case, a sort of literary crime to any man, from the authority of his own eyes and hands, to dispute it.

Mr Pococke makes two very curious and sensible remarks in point of fact, but of which he does not know the reason. The Nile, he says, in the beginning, turns red, and sometimes green; then the waters are unwholesome. He supposes that the source of the Nile beginning to flow plentifully, the waters at first bring away that green or red filth which may be about the lakes at its rise, or at the rise of those small rivers that flow into it, near its principal source; for though there is so little water in the Nile, when at

lowest, that there is hardly any current in many parts of it, yet it cannot be supposed that the water should stagnate in the bed of the Nile, so as to become green. Afterwards the water becomes very red and still more turbid, and then it begins to be wholesome *.

The true reason of this appearance is from those immense marshes spread over the country about Narea and Caffa, where there is little level, and where the water accumulates, and is stagnant, before it overflows into the river Abiad, which rises there. The overflowing of these immense marshes carries first that discoloured water into Egypt; then follows, in Abyssinia, the overflowing of the great lake Tzana, through which the Nile passes, which, having been stagnated and without rain for six months, under a scorching sun, joins its putrid waters with the first. There are, moreover, very few rivers in Abyssinia that run after November, as they stand in prodigious pools below, in the country of the Shangalla, and afford drink for the elephant, and habitation and food for the hippopotamus. These pools likewise throw off their stagnant water into the Nile on receiving the first rains; at last, the rivers, marshes, and lakes, being refreshed by showers, (the rain becoming constant) and passing through the kingdom of Sennaar, the soil of which is a red bole, this mixture, and the moving sands of the deserts, fall into the current, and precipitate all the viscous and putrid substances, which cohere and float in the river; and thence (as Pococke has well observed) the sign of the Nile being wholesome, is not when it is clear and green, but when, mingled with fresh water, and after precipitation, it be-

* Pococke, vol. i. p. 199, 200.

comes red and turbid, and stains the water of the Mediterranean.

The next remark of Mr Pococke * is equally true. It has been observed, says he, that after the rainy season is over, the Nile fallen, and the whole country drained from inundation, it has begun again to rise; and he gives an instance of this in December 1737, when it had a sudden increase, which alarmed all Egypt, where the received opinion was that it presaged calamities. This also is said to have happened in the time of Cleopatra, when their government was subverted, their ancient race of kings extinguished in the person of that princess, and Egypt became a province to the Romans.

The reader will not expect, in these enlightened times, that I should use arguments to convince him, that this rising of the Nile had nothing to do with the extinction of the race of the Ptolemies, though popular preachers and prophets have always made use of these fortuitous events to confirm the vulgar in their prejudices.

The rains, that cease in Abyssinia about the 8th of September, leave generally a sickly season in the low country; but other rains begin towards the end of October, in the last days of the Ethiopic month Tekemt, which continue moderately about three weeks, and end the 8th of November, or 12th of the Ethiopic month Hedar. All sickness and epidemical diseases then disappear, and the 8th of that month is the feast of St Michael, the day the king marches, and his army begins their campaign; but the effect of these second rains seldom makes any, or a very short appearance in Egypt, all the canals being open; these

* Pococke, vol. 1. p. 201

are the rains upon which depend their latter crops, and for which the Agows, at the source of the Nile, pray to the river, or to the genius residing in the river. We had plentiful showers both in going and coming to that province, especially in our journey out. Whenever these rains prove excessive, as in some particular years it seems they do, though but very rarely, the land-floods, and those from the marshes, falling upon the ground, already much hardened and broken into chasms, by two months intense heat of the sun, run violently into the Nile without sinking into the earth. The consequence is this temporary rising of the Nile in December, which is as unconnected with the good and bad crops of Egypt, as it is with those in Palestine or Syria.

The quantity of rain that falls in Ethiopia varies greatly from year to year, as do the months in which it falls. The quantity that fell, during 1770, in Gondar, between the vernal equinox and the 8th of September, through a funnel of one foot English in diameter, was 35,555 inches; and, in 1771, the quantity that fell in the same circumference was 41,955 inches in the same space *.

In 1770, August was the rainy month; in 1771 July. Both these years the people paid the meery, and the Wafaa Ullah was in August. When July is the rainy month, the rains generally cease for some days in the beginning of August, and then a prodigious deal falls in the latter end of that month, and the first week of September. In other years, July and August are the violent rainy months, whilst June is fair. And lastly, in others, May, June, July, August,

* See Table, or Register of Rain, that fell in these years, inserted at the end of this book.

and the first week of September. Now we shall suppose (which is the most common case of all) that every month from June doubles its rain. The Wafaa Ullah generally takes place about the 9th of August, the tribute being then due, and all attention to the Mikeas is abandoned at 14 real peeks, the Calish is then cut, and the water let down to the Delta.

Now, these 14 peeks are not a proof how much water there is to overflow the land; for supposing nine days for its passage from Ethiopia, then the 9th of August receives at Cairo no later rains than those that have fallen the 1st of August in Ethiopia, and from that date till the 17th of September, the Nile increases one third of its whole inundation, which is never suffered to appear on the Mikeas, but is turned down to the lakes in the Delta, as I suppose it always has been; so that the quantity of water which falls in Ethiopia has never yet been ascertained, and never can be by the Mikeas, nor can it ever be known what quantity of water comes in to Egypt, or what quantity of ground it is sufficient to overflow, unless the dikes were to be kept close till the Nile attained its extreme height, which would be about the 25th of September, long before which it would be over the banks and mounds, if they held in till then, or have swept Cairo and all the Delta into the Mediterranean; and if it should not do that, it would retire so late from the fields as to leave the ground in no condition to be sown that year.

I do not comprehend what idea other travellers have formed of the beginning of the inundation of the Nile, as they seem to admit that the banks are not overflowed; and this is certainly the case; because the cities and villages are built there as securely as on the highest part of Egypt, and even when the

Nile has risen to its greatest height, they still are obliged to water those spots with machines. In another part of the work it is explained how the calishes carry the water upon the lands, approaching always to the banks as the river rises in proportion, and these calishes being derived from the Nile at right angles with the stream, and carrying the water by the inclination of the ground, in a direction different from the course of the river, the water is perfectly stagnated at the foot of the hills, till, accumulated as the stream rises, it moves in a contrary direction backwards again, and approaches its banks. But when the inundation is so great that the back-water comes in contact with the current of the Nile, by known laws it must partake the same motion with it, and so all Egypt become one torrent.

Dr Shaw, indeed *, says, that there seems to be a descent from the bank to the foot of the mountains, but this he considers as an optic fallacy; I wish he had told us upon what principle of optics; but if it was really so, how comes it that the banks are every year dry, when the foot of the mountains is at the same time under inundation; or, in other words, what is the reason of that undisputed fact, that the foot of the mountains is laid under water in the beginning of the river's rising, while the ground which they cultivate by labour near the banks, cannot supply itself from the river by machines, till near the height of the inundation? these facts will not be controverted by any traveller, who has ever been in Upper Egypt; but if this had been admitted as truth instead of an optic fallacy, this question would have immediately followed: If the land of Egypt at the foot of the mountains is

* Shaw's Travels, sect. . p. 401.

the lowest, the first overflowed, and the longest covered with water, and often the only part overflowed at all, whence can it arise that it is not upon a level with the banks of the river, if it is true that the land of Egypt receives additional height every year by the mud from Abyssinia deposited by the stream? and this question would not have been so easily answered.

The Nile for these thirty years has but once so failed as to occasion dearth, but never in that period so as to produce famine in Egypt. The redundance of the water, sweeping every thing before it, has thrice been the cause, not of dearth, but of famine and emigration; but carelessness, I believe, has been the occasion of both, and very often the malice of the Arabs; for there are in Egypt, from Siout downwards, great remains of ancient works, vast lakes, canals, and large conduits for water, destined by the ancients to keep this river under controul, serving as reservoirs to supply a scanty year, and as drains, or outlets, to prevent the over abundance of water in wet years, by spreading it in the thirsty sands of Libya to the great advantage of the Arabs, rather than letting it run to waste in the Mediterranean. The mouths of these immense drains being out of repair, in a scanty year, contribute by their evacuation to make it still scantier by not retaining water; and if after a dearth they are well secured, or raised too high, and a wet season follows, they then occasion a destructive inundation.

I hope I have now satisfied the reader, that Egypt was never an arm of the sea, or formed by sediments brought down in the Nile, but that it was created with other parts of the globe, at the same time, in the same manner, and for the same purposes; and we are warranted to say this, till we receive from the hand of

Providence a work of such imperfection, that its destruction can be calculated from the very means by which it was first formed, and which were the apparent sources of its beauty and pre-eminence. Egypt, like other countries, will perish by the fiat of Him that made it; but when, or in what manner, lies hid where it ought to be, inaccessible to the useless, vain inquiries, and idle speculations of man*.

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* It appears sufficiently from the reasoning in the preceding pages, how little dependence can be placed on the various measures of the Mikeas given by travellers of different nations, as they, in general, vary, both in the accuracy of their statements, and the length of the measure which they have applied to the Nilometer. Much less can the quantities of water which have overflowed Egypt, in different ages, be compared by the reports from the Mikeas, as its scale and structure have undoubtedly been often changed. It is impossible from these reports to determine how much the Delta has gained from the deposition of the river. In the course of 2000 years it has surely gained, but not considerably; for, in the days of Herodotus, the boundaries of Lower Egypt seem to have been fixed. It was inhabited and civilized in the days of Joseph, scarcely one thousand years after the deluge. It appears to be the gift of the Nile, but, like those of other alluvial countries, the charter of the donation seems to be lost. A large river, in a series of ages, must always form a certain portion of alluvial soil. The Nile, before it reaches the north of Egypt, runs slow, but still it has a current, especially before the inundation. The lower Egypt is evidently ground deserted by the sea, and covered with the accumulated sediment of the Nile. Where the stream, as in upper Egypt, is more rapid, the deposition is less. Mr Bruce and his opponents may be easily reconciled on this subject.—E.

CHAP. XVIII.

Inquiry about the Possibility of changing the course of the Nile—Cause of the Nucta.

It has been thought a problem that merited to be considered, Whether it was possible to turn the current of the Nile into the Red Sea, and thereby to famish Egypt? I think the question should more properly be, Whether the water of the Nile, running into Egypt, could be so diminished, or diverted, that it should never be sufficient to prepare that country for annual cultivation? Now to this it is answered, That there seems to be no doubt but that it is possible; because the Nile, and all the rivers that run into it, and all the rains that swell those rivers, fall in a country, fully two miles above the level of the sea; therefore, it cannot be denied, that there is level enough to divert many of the rivers into the Red Sea, the Indian, and Atlantic Oceans, or perhaps, still easier, by turning the course of the river Abiad till it meets the level of the Niger, or discharges it through the desert into the Mediterranean.

Lalibala, as we have already seen, attempted the former method with great appearance of success; and this prince, to whom the accidental circumstances of

the time had given extraordinary powers, and who was otherwise a man of great capacity and resolution, might, if he had persevered, have completed his purpose, the thing being possible, that is, no law of nature against it, and all difficulties being only relative to the powers vested in those who are engaged in the undertaking. Alexander the Great would have succeeded—his father Philip would have miscarried—Lewis the XIV. would perhaps have accomplished it, as easily as he united the two seas by the canal of Languedoc, and with the same engineers; but he is the only European prince of whom this could have been expected with any degree of probability.

Alphonso Albuquerque, viceroy of India, is said to have wrote frequently to the king of Portugal, Don Emanuel, to send him some pioneers from Madeira, people accustomed to level ground, and prepare it for sugar canes, with whose assistance he was to execute that enterprise of turning the Nile into the Red Sea, and famishing Egypt. His son mentions this very improbable story in his* father's commentaries; and he says further, that he imagines it might have been done, because it was a known fact, that the Arabs in Upper Egypt, when in rebellion against the Soldan, used to interrupt the course of the canal between Cosseir on the Red Sea, and Kenna in Egypt.

Tellez and le Grande, mentioning the two opinions of the father and the son upon this subject, give great praise to the son at the expence of the father, but without reason.

In the first place, we have seen that the utmost exertion Don Emanuel could make, was to send 400 men to assist the king of Abyssinia, whose country was then

* Alph. d'Albuquerque, Comment. lib. iv. cap. 7.

almost conquered by the Turks and Moors. It was not then from India we were to expect the execution of so arduous an undertaking. And as to the second, the younger Albuquerque is mistaken egregiously in point of fact, for there never was a canal between Cosseir and Kenna; the goods from the Red Sea were transported by a caravan, and are so yet. We have seen, in the beginning of this work, the account of my travelling thither from Kenna; this intercourse probably was often interrupted by the Arabs in the days he mentions, and so it is still; but it is the caravan, not the canal, that is stopt by the Arabs, for no canal ever existed.

The sum of all this story is, a long and violent persecution followed the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, who were accustomed to live in tents, which, with their dislike to the christian churches, made them destroy all the buildings of stone, as also persecute the masons, whom they considered as being employed in the advancement of idolatry: these unhappy workmen, therefore, fled in numbers to Lalibala, an Abyssinian prince of their own religion, who employed them in many stupendous works for diverting the Nile into the Red Sea, or the Indian Ocean, which I have already described, and which exist entire to this day *.

This idea, indeed, had subsisted as long as the royal family lived in the south part of Abyssinia, in Shoa, in the neighbourhood, and sometimes on the very spot where the attempt was made. When the court, however, removed northward, and the princes, no longer confined in Geshen, (a mountain in Amhara) were imprisoned, as they now are, in Wechne, in Belessen,

* Vol. I. b. ii. chap. 8

near Gondar, these transactions of remote times and places were gradually forgot, and often misrepresented; though, so far down as the beginning of this century, we find Tecla Haimanout I.* (king of Abyssinia) expostulating, by a letter, with the basha of Cairo, upon the murder of the French envoy, M. du Roule, and threatening the Turkish regency, that, if they persisted in such misbehaviour, he would make the Nile the instrument of his vengeance, the keys of which were in his hand, to give them famine or plenty, as they should deserve of him. In my time, no sensible man in Abyssinia believed that such a thing was possible, and few that it had ever been attempted.

As for the opinion of those, that the Nile may be turned into the Red Sea from Nubia or Egypt, it deserves no answer; it is unintelligible. What could be the motive of such an undertaking? Would the Egyptians suffer such an operation to be carried on in their own country, for the sake of starving themselves? And if the country had been taken from them by an enemy, still it could not be the interest of that conqueror to let the inhabitants, now become his subjects, perish, and much less to reduce them to the necessity of so doing by such an undertaking.

Much has been wrote about a miraculous drop, or dew, called Gotto, or Nucta, which falls in Egypt precisely on St John's day, and is believed to be the peculiar gift of that saint; it stops the plague, causes dough to leaven, or ferment, and announces a speedy and plentiful inundation.

I hope my reader will not expect that I should enter into the discussion of the part St John is thought to have in this event; my business is only with natural causes.

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* See this letter in the life of that prince.

Memphis, and Alexandria, and all the ancient cities of Lower Egypt, stand upon cisterns, into which the Nile, upon its overflowing, was admitted, and there remained till it had deposited all its sediment, and became fit for drinking. These cisterns are now full of filth; though in disrepair, the water, when the Nile is high, insinuates itself into them through the broken conduits.

In February and March the sun is on its approach to the zenith of one extremity of Egypt, and of course has a very considerable influence upon the other. The Nile being now fallen low, the water in the cisterns putrefies, and the river itself has lost all its volatile and finer parts by the continued action of a vertical sun; so that, instead of being subject to evaporation, it becomes daily more and more inclined to putrefaction. About St John's day *, it receives a plentiful mixture of the fresh and fallen rain from Ethiopia, which dilutes and refreshes the almost corrupted river; and the sun, near at hand, exherts its natural influence upon the water, which now is become light enough to be exhaled, though it has still with it a mixture of the corrupted fluid; so that it rises but a small height during the first few days of the inundation, then falls down and returns to the earth in plentiful and abundant dews; and that this is really so, I am persuaded from what I observed myself at Cairo.

My quadrant was placed on the flat roof, or terrass, of a gentleman's house where I was taking observations; I had gone down to supper, and soon after re-

* In Abyssinia, the 24th June. This is Mr Bruce's note; which I do not fully comprehend. St John's day in Abyssinia is on the 29th of August, old style, with us. The 19th day of June O. S. or the 25th of their Sené, is called by the Abyssinians tentu lekremt, the beginning of winter, that is of the severe rainy weather.—E.

turned, when I found the brass limb of the quadrant covered with small drops of dew, which were turned to a perfect green, or copperas colour; and this green had so corroded the brass in an hour's time, that the marks remained on the limb of the quadrant for six months; and the cavities made by the corrosion were plainly discernible through a microscope.

It is in February, March, or April only, that the plague begins in Egypt. I do not believe it an endemial disease; I rather think it comes from Constantinople with merchandise, or passengers; and at this time of the year, that the air having attained a degree of putridity proper to receive it by the long absence of dews, the infection is thereto joined, and continues to rage till the period I just spoke of, when it is suddenly stopped by the dews occasioned by a refreshing mixture of rain-water, which is poured out into the Nile at the beginning of the inundation.

The first and most remarkable sign of the change brought about in the air, is the sudden stopping of the plague at Saint John's day; every person, though shut up from society for months before, buys, sells, and communicates with his neighbour without any sort of apprehension; and it was never known, as far as I could learn upon fair inquiry, that one fell sick of the plague after this anniversary: it will be observed, I don't say *died;* there are, I know, examples of that, though I believe but few. The plague is not always a disease that suddenly terminates; it often takes a considerable time to come to a head, appearing only by symptoms; so that people taken ill, under the most putrid influence of the air, linger on, struggling with the disease, which has already got such hold that they cannot recover; but what I say and mean is, that no person is taken ill of the plague, so as to die, after the dew has fallen in June; and no symptoms of

the plague are ever commonly seen in Egypt, but in those spring months already mentioned, the greater part of which are totally destitute of moisture.

I think the instance I am going to give, which is universally known, and cannot be denied, brings this so home, that no doubt can remain of the origin of this dew, and its powerful effects upon the plague.

The Turks and Moors are known to be predestinarians. They believe the hour of man's death is so immutably fixed, that nothing can either advance or defer it a moment. Secure in this principle, they expose in the market-place, immediately after Saint John's day, the clothes of the many thousands that have died during the late continuance of the plague; all which imbibe the moist air of the evening and the morning, are handled, bought, put on, and worn without any apprehension of danger; and though these consists of furs, cotton, silk, and woollen cloths, which are stuffs the most retentive of infection, no accident happens to those who wear them, from this their happy confidence.

I shall here sum up all that I have to say relating to the river Nile, with a tradition handed down to us by Herodotus, the father of ancient history, upon which moderns, less instructed, have grafted a number of errors. Herodotus * says, that he was informed by the secretary of Minerva's treasury, that one half of the water of the Nile flowed due north into Egypt, while the other half took an opposite course, and flowed directly south into Ethiopia.

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* Herod. lib. ii. p. 98. sect. 28. For a very full and able account of this tradition, vide the Geography of Herodotus Illustrated, by Major Rennel; and also Larcher's excellent French translation of that historian, in 9 vols. 8vo, Paris.—E.

The secretary was probably of that country himself, and seems, by his observation, to have known more of it than all the ancients together. In fact, we have seen that, between 13° and 14° N. latitude, the Nile, with all its tributary streams, which have their rise and course within the tropical rains, falls down into the flat country (the kingdom of Sennaar), which is more than a mile lower than the high country in Abyssinia, and thence, with a little inclination, it runs into Egypt.

Again, in lat. 9°, in the kingdom of Gingero, the Zebee runs south, or south-east, into the inner Ethiopia, as do also many other rivers, and, as I have heard from the natives of that country, empty themselves into a lake, as those on the north of the line do into the lake Tzana; thence distribute their waters to the east and to the west. These become the heads of great rivers, that run through the interior countries of Ethiopia (corresponding to the sea-coast of Melinda and Mombaza) into the Indian ocean; whilst, on the westward, they are the origin of the vast streams that fall into the Atlantic, passing through Benin and Congo, southward of the river Gamba, and the Sierra-Leona.

In short, the periodical rains from the tropic of Capricorn to the Line, being in equal quantity with those that fall between the Line and the tropic of Cancer, it is plain, that if the land of Ethiopia sloped equally from the Line southward and northward, half of the rains that fall on each side would go north, and half south; but as the ground from 5° N. declines all southward, it follows that the river which runs to the southward must be equal to those that run to the northward, *plus* the rain that falls in the 5° north latitude, where the ground begins to slope to the southward; and there can be little doubt this is at least one of the reasons why there are in the southern conti-

nent so many rivers larger than the Nile, that run both into the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

From this very true and sensible relation handed to us by Herodotus, from the authority of the secretary of Minerva, the Nubian geographer has framed a fiction of his own, which is, that the river Nile divides itself into two branches, one of which runs into Egypt northward, and one through the country of the Negroes westward, into the Atlantic Ocean. And this opinion has been greedily adopted by M. Ludolf *, who cites the authority of Leo Africanus, and that of his monk Gregory, both of them, in these respects, fully as much mistaken as the Numidian geographer himself. M. Ludolf, after quoting a passage of Pliny, tells us that he had consulted the famous Bochart upon that subject, whether the Nile and the Niger (the river that runs through Nigritia to the Western Ocean) were one and the same river? The famous Bochart answers him peremptorily in the true spirit of a schoolman,—That there is nothing more certain than that the Niger is a part of the river Nile. With great submission, however, I must venture to say there is not the least foundation for this assertion.

Pliny seems the first who gave rise to it; but he speaks modestly upon the subject, giving his reasons as he goes along. "Nigri fluvio eadem natura, quæ Nilo, calamum et papyrum, et easdem gignit animantes, iisdemque temporibus augescit †." That it has the same soil from which the Nile takes its colour, the water is the same in taste, produces the same reeds,

* Vid. Ludolf. in Proœmio Histor. Æ. op. l. 8. Id. ll. 1. cap. iii. p. 178. Leo Africanus, in Descrip. Afric. lib. I. cap. vii.

† L. lib. 5. cap. viii.

and especially the papyrus; has the same animals in it, such as the crocodile and Hippopotamus, and overflows at the same season; this is saying nothing but what may be applied, with equal truth, to every other river between the northern tropic and the Line; but the other two authors, the Nubian and the monk, assert each of them a direct falsehood. The Nubian says, that if the Nile carried all the rains that fall in Abyssinia down into Egypt, the people would not be safe in their houses. To this I answer by a matter of fact; the map of the whole course of the Nile is before the reader; and it is plain from thence, that the whole rain in Abyssinia must now go, and ever has gone, down into Egypt, and yet the people are very safe in their houses, and very seldom is the whole land of Egypt completely overflowed: and it is by no means less certain, from the same inspection, that, unless a river as large as the Nile, constantly full, having its rise in countries subject to perpetual rains, and pouring its stream, which never decreases, into that river, as the Abiad does at Halfaia, all the waters in Abyssinia, collected in the Nile, would not be sufficient to pass its scanty stream through the burning deserts of Nubia and the Barabra, so as it should be of any utility when arrived in Egypt.

The next falsehood in point of fact is that of the monk Gregory, who says that this left branch of the Nile parts from it, after having passed the kingdom of Dongola into Nubia, after which it runs through El-wah, and so down the desert into the Mediterranean, between the Cyrenaicum and Alexandria. Now, first, we know, from the authority of all antiquity, that there is not a desert more destitute of rivers than that of the Thebaid. This want of water (not the distance) made the voyage to the temple of Jupiter Ammon an enterprise next to desperate, and so worthy of Alex-

ander, who never, however, met a river in his way; had there been there such a stream, there could be no doubt that the banks of it would have been fully as well inhabited as those of the Nile, and the Thebaid consequently no desert. Besides, the caravans, which for ages passed between Egypt and Sennaar, must have seen this river, and drunk of it; so must the travellers, in the beginning of this century, Poncet and M. du Roule. They were both at Elvah; and, passing through the dreary deserts of Selima, they must have gone along its side, and crossed it, where it parted from the Nile in their journey to Sennaar. Whereas we know they never saw running water from the time they left the Nile at Siout in Egypt, till they fell in again with it at Moscho, during which period they had nothing but well water, which they carried in skins with them.

The district of Elvah is the Oasis Magna and Oasis Parva of the ancients; large plentiful springs breaking out in the middle of the burning sands, and running constantly without diminution, have invited inhabitants to flock around them. These conducting off the water that spills over the fountain by trenches, the neighbouring lands have quickly produced a plentiful vegetation: gardens and verdure are spread on every side, large groves of palm trees have been planted, and the overflowings of every fountain have produced a little paradise, like so many beautiful and fruitful islands amidst an immense ocean.

The coast of the Mediterranean, from the Cyrenaicum or Ptolemaid (that is, the coast from Bengazi, or Derna, to Alexandria), is well known by the shipping of every nation; but what pilot or passenger ever saw this magnificent watering-place in that desert coast, where this branch of the Nile comes down into the Mediterranean? Besides, the author of this fable be-

trays his ignorance in the very beginning, where he derives this left branch of the Nile from the principal river, and says, that, after passing the kingdom of Dongola, it enters Nubia. Now, when it entered Dongola, it must have already passed Nubia; for Dongola is the capital of the Barabra, every inch of which is to the northward of Nubia. I do not know worse guides in the geography of Africa than Leo Africanus, and the Nubian geographer. I believe them both impostors; and the commentators upon them have greatly increased, by their own conjectures, the confusion and errors which the text has everywhere occasioned.

As far as I have been ever able to learn, by a very diligent and cautious inquiry, from the inhabitants of neighbouring countries, I believe the origin of the Niger is in lat. 12° north, and in long. 30° from the meridian of Greenwich nearly; that it is composed of various rivers falling down the sides of very high mountains, called * Dyre and Tegla; and runs straight west into the heart of Africa. I conclude also, that this river (though it has abundant supply from every mountain) is very much diminished by evaporation, running in a long course upon the very limits of the tropical rains, when entire, under the name of Senega; or, perhaps, when divided under those of Senega and Gambia, it loses itself in the Atlantic Ocean. I conceive also, that, as Pliny says, it has the same taste and natural productions with the Nile, because it runs

* This information, and the reasoning upon it, have since been disproved by the travels of Messrs Park, Brown, and Horneman. The Niger runs east, and appears to be lost in the low marshes of Wangara, in the centre of Africa; nor is it probable that it has any connection with the river of Egypt. The junction of the Bahar el Abiad and Nile of Soudàn is not probable; but the tradition or account obtained by Herodotus in Egypt is current at this day among the Arabs.—E.

in the same climate, and, like that river, owes, if not its existence, yet certainly its increase and fulness, to the same cause, the tropical rains in the northern hemisphere falling from high mountains.

I hope I have now fully exhausted every subject worthy of inquiry, as to the place where the fountains of the Nile are situated; also as to its course and various names, the different countries through which it flows, the true cause, and every thing curious attending its inundations; and that as in old times *, *Caput Nili quaerere*, "To seek the source of the Nile," was a proverb in use to signify the impossibility of an attempt, it may hereafter be applied, with as much reason, to denote the inutility of any such undertakings.

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* A full account of the opinions which are now entertained concerning this discovery, will be found in the Appendix to Book VIII. of these Travels. The pretensions of the author, and of the Jesuits, to the merit of having been the first Europeans who visited the sources of the Blue River (Bahar Azergue); and the sentiments of the antients with regard to that branch of the Nile, and the Bahar Abiad, or White River, are examined in the same place. The source of all the Arabian information respecting the Nile was the geography of the Greeks, especially of Ptolemy. His work and opinions were familiar to Hasan Ibn Almondar, who in a book called Kitab alagnab, laid the foundations of the Arabic system, and translated the table of the ten heads of the Nile, in the mountains of the moon, from a Greek work, of which a fragment is preserved in Hudson's Geographi Minores. This was copied from him by Abu Abdallah Mohammed Ben Mohammed Ben Abdallah *Ben Idris*, a native of Ceuta in Barbary, about A. D. 1153; and may be found in all the Arabic works on Geography. It occurs in Maasoudi, in Al Mamoun's geography, and in several other Arabic works, for which see "Extraits de MSS. dans la Bibliotheque du Roi de France," in two volumes, published at Paris, a book well known to Orientalists.

CHAP. XIX.

Kind Reception among the Agows—Their Number, Trade, Character, &c.

After having given my reader so long, though, I hope, no unentertaining lecture, it is time to go back to Woldo, whom we left settling our reception with the chief of the village of Geesh. We found the measures taken by this man such as convinced us at once of his capacity and attachment. The miserable Agows, assembled all around him, were too much interested in the appearance we made, not to be exceedingly inquisitive how long our stay was to be among them. They saw, by the horse driven before us, that we belonged to Fasil, and suspected, for the same reason, that they were to maintain us, or, in other words, that we should live at discretion upon them as long as we chose to tarry there; but Woldo, with great address, had dispelled these fears almost as soon as they were formed. He informed them of the king's grant to me of the village of Geesh; that Fasil's tyranny and avarice would end that day, and another [illegible], like Negade Ras Georgis, was come to pass a cheerful time among them, with a resolution to pay for every labour they were ordered to perform, and purchase all things for ready money: he added, more-

over, that no military service was further to be exacted from them, either by the king or governor of Damot, nor from their present master, as he had no enemies. We found these news had circulated with great rapidity, and we met with a hearty welcome upon our arrival at the village.

Woldo had asked a house from the Shum, who very civilly had granted me his own; it was just large enough to serve me, but we were obliged to take possession of four or five others, and we were scarcely settled in these when a servant arrived from Fasil to intimate to the Shum his surrender of the property and sovereignty of Geesh to me, in consequence of a grant from the king: he brought with him a fine, large, milk-white cow, two sheep, and two goats; the sheep and goats I understood were from Welleta Yasous. Fasil also sent us six jars of hydromel, fifty wheat loaves of very excellent bread, and to this Welleta Yasous had added two middle-sized horns of excellent strong spirits. Our hearts were now perfectly at ease, and we passed a very merry evening. Strates, above all, endeavoured, with many a bumper of the good hydromel of Bure, to subdue the devil which he had swallowed in the enchanted water. Woldo, who had done his part to great perfection, and had reconciled the minds of all the people of the village to us, had a little apprehension for himself; he thought he had lost credit with me, and therefore employed the servant of Ayto Aylo to desire me not to speak of the sash to Fasil's servant. I assured him, that, as long as I saw him acting properly, as he now did, it was much more probable I should give him another sash on our return, than complain of the means he had used to get this last. This entirely removed all his fears, and indeed as long after as he was with us,

he every day deserved more and more our commendations.

Before we went to bed I satisfied Fasil's servant, who had orders from Welleta Yasous to return immediately; and, as he saw we did not spare the liquor that he brought us, he promised to send a fresh supply as soon as he returned home, which he did not fail to perform the day after.

Woldo was now perfectly happy; he had no superior or spy over his actions; he had explained himself to the Shum, that we should want somebody to buy necessaries to make bread for us, and to take care of the management of our house. We displayed our lesser articles for barter to the Shum, and told him the most considerable purchases, such as oxen and sheep, were to be paid in gold. He was struck with the appearance of our wealth, and the generosity of our proposals, and told Woldo that he insisted, since we were in his house, we would take his daughters for our house-keepers. The proposal was a most reasonable one, and readily accepted. He accordingly sent for three in an instant, and we delivered them their charge. The eldest took it upon her readily; she was about sixteen years of age, of a stature above the middle size, but she was remarkably genteel, and, colour apart, her features would have made her a beauty in any country in Europe; she was, besides, very sprightly; we understood not one word of her language, though she comprehended very easily the signs that we made. This nymph of the Nile was called by nickname Irepone, which signifies some animal that destroys mice, but whether of the ferret or snake kind I could not perfectly understand; sometimes it was one and sometimes another, but which it was I thought of no great importance.

The first and second day, after disposing of some of our stock in purchases, she thought herself obliged to render us an account, and give back the residue at night to Woldo, with a protestation that she had not stolen or kept any thing to herself. I looked upon this regular accounting as an ungenerous treatment of our benefactress. I called on Woldo and made him produce a parcel that contained the same with the first commodities we had given her; this consisted of beads, antimony, small scissars, knives, and large needles; I then brought out a packet of the same that had not been broken, and told her they were intended to be distributed among her friends, and that we expected no account from her; on the contrary, that, after she had bestowed these, to buy us necessaries, and for any purposes she pleased, I had still as many more to leave her at parting, for the trouble she had given herself. I often thought the head of the little savage would have turned with the possession of so much riches, and so great confidence, and it was impossible to be so blinded, as not to see that I had already made great progress in her affections. To the number of trifles I had added one ounce of gold, value about fifty shillings sterling, which I thought would defray our expences all the time we staid; and having now perfectly arranged the œconomy of our family, nothing remained but to make the proper observations.

The houses are all of clay and straw. There was no place for fixing my clock; I was therefore obliged to employ a very excellent watch made for me by Ellicott. The dawn now began, and a few minutes afterwards every body was at their doors all of them crowded to see us, and we breakfasted in public with very great cheerfulness. The white cow was killed, and every one invited to share of her. The Shum, priest of the river, should likewise have been of the

party, but he declined either sitting or eating with us, though his sons were not so scrupulous.

It is upon the principal fountain and altar, already mentioned, that once a-year, on the first appearance of the dog-star, (or, as others say, eleven days after) this priest assembles the heads of the clans; and having sacrificed a black heifer that never bore a calf, they plunge the head of it into this fountain; they then wrap it up in its own hide, so as no more to be seen, after having sprinkled the hide within and without with water from the fountain. The carcase is then split in half, and cleaned with extraordinary care; and, thus prepared, it is laid upon the hillock over the first fountain, and washed all over with its water, while the elders of considerable people carry water in their hands joined (it must not be in any dish) from the two other fountains; they then assemble upon the small hill a little west of St Michael; (it used to be the place where the church now stands) there they divide the carcase into pieces corresponding to the number of the tribes, and each tribe has its privilege, or pretensions, to particular parts, which are not in proportion to the present consequence of the several clans. Geesh has a principal slice, though the most inconsiderable territory of the whole; Sacala has the next; and Zeegam, the most considerable of them all in power and riches, has the least of the whole. I found it in vain to ask upon what rules this distribution was founded; their general and constant answer was, It was so observed in old times.

After having eaten this carcase raw, according to their custom, and drunk the Nile water to the exclusion of any other liquor, they pile up the bones on the place where they sit, and burn them to ashes. This used to be performed where the church now stands; but Ras Sela Christos, some time after having beaten the Agows, and desirous, at the Jesuits' instigation, to

convert them to Christianity, demolished their altar where the bones were burnt, and built a church upon the site, the doors of which, I believe, were never opened since that reign, nor is there now, as far as we could perceive, any Christian there who might wish to see it frequented. After Sela Christos had demolished their altar by building this church, they ate the carcase, and burnt the bones, on the top of the mountain of Geesh, out of the way of profanation, where the vestiges of this ceremony may yet be seen; but probably the fatigue attending this, and the great indifference their late governors have had for Christianity, have brought them back to a small hillock by the side of the marsh, west of Saint Michael's church, and a little to the southward, where they perform this solemnity every year; and they will probably resume their first altar when the church is fallen to ruins, which they are every day privately hastening.

After they have finished their bloody banquet, they carry the head close wrapt from sight in the hide, into the cavern, which they say reaches below the fountains, and there, by a common light, without torches, or a number of candles, as denoting a solemnity, they perform their worship, the particulars of which I never could learn; it is a piece of free-masonry, which every body knows, and no body ventures to reveal. At a certain time of the night they leave the cave, but at what time, or by what rule, I could not learn; neither would they tell me what became of the head, whether it was eaten, or buried, or how consumed. The Abyssinians have a story probably created by themselves, that the devil appears to them, and with him they eat the head, swearing obedience to him upon certain conditions, that of sending rain, and a good season for their bees and cattle;

however this may be, it is certain that they pray to the spirit residing in the river, whom they call the Everlasting God, Light of the World, Eye of the World, God of Peace, their Saviour, and Father of the Universe.

Our landlord, the Shum, made no scruple of reciting his prayers for seasonable rain, for plenty of grass, for the preservation of serpents, at least one kind of this reptile: he also deprecated thunder in these prayers, which he pronounced very pathetically, with a kind of tone or song; he called the river "Most High God, Saviour of the World;" of the other words I could not well judge, but by the interpretation of Woldo. Those titles, however, of divinity which he gave the river, I could perfectly comprehend without an interpreter, and for these only I am a voucher.

I asked the priest, into whose good graces I had purposely insinuated myself, if ever any spirit had been seen by him? He answered without hesitation, Yes; very frequently. He said he had seen the spirit the evening of the 3d, (just as the sun was setting) under a tree, which he shewed me at a distance, who told him of the death of a son, and also that a party from Fasil's army was coming; that being afraid, he consulted his serpent, who ate readily and heartily, from which he knew no harm was to befal him from us. I asked him if he could prevail on the spirit to appear to me? He said he could not venture to make this request. If he thought he would appear to me, if, in the evening, I sat under that tree alone? He said he believed not. He said he was of a very graceful figure and appearance; he thought rather older than middle age, but he seldom chose to look at his face; he had a long white beard, his clothes not like theirs, of leather, but like silk, of the fashion of the country.

I asked him how he was certain it was not a man? he laughed, or rather sneered, shaking his head, and saying, No, no, it is no man, but a spirit I asked him then what spirit he thought it was? he said it was *of the river*, it was God, the Father of mankind; but I never could bring him to be more explicit. I then desired to know why he prayed against thunder. He said, because it was hurtful to the bees, their great revenue being honey and wax: then, why he prayed for serpents? he replied, Because they taught him the coming of good or evil. It seems they have all several of these creatures in their neighbourhood, and the richer sort always in their houses, whom they take care of, and feed before they undertake a journey, or any affair of consequence. They take this animal from his hole, and put butter and milk before him, of which he is extravagantly fond; if he does not eat, ill-fortune is near at hand.

Nanna Georgis, Chief of the Agows of Banja, a man of the greatest consideration at Gondar, both with the king and Ras Michael, and my particular friend, as I had kept him in my house, and attended him in his sickness, after the campaign of 1769, confessed to me his apprehensions that he should die, because the serpent did not eat upon his leaving his house to come to Gondar. He was, indeed, very ill of the low country fever, and very much alarmed; but he recovered and returned home, by Ras Michael's order, to gather the Agows together against Waragna Fasil; which he did, and soon after, he and other seven chiefs of the Agows were slain at the battle of Banja; so here the serpent's warning was verified by a second trial, though it failed in the first.

Before an invasion of the Galla, or an inroad of the enemy, they say these serpents disappear, and are nowhere to be found. Fasil, the sagacious and cunning

governor of the country, was, as it was said, greatly addicted to this species of divination, in so much as never to mount his horse, or go from home, if an animal of this kind, which he had in keeping, refused to eat.

The Shum's name was Kefla Abay, or Servant of the River; he was a man about seventy, not very lean, but infirm, fully as much so as might have been expected from that age. He conceived that he might have had eighty four or eighty-five children. That honourable charge which he possessed had been in his family from the beginning of the world, as he imagined. Indeed, if all his predecessors had as numerous families as he, there was no probability of the succession devolving to strangers. He had a long white beard, and very moderately thick; an ornament rare in Abyssinia, where they have seldom any hair upon their chin. He had round his body a skin wrapt and tied round with a broad belt; I should rather say it was an ox's hide: but it was so scraped and rubbed, and manufactured, that it was of the consistence and appearance of shamoy, only browner in colour. Above this he wore a cloak with the hood up, and covering his head; he was bare-legged, but had sandals, much like those upon ancient statues; these, however, he put off as soon as ever he approached the bog where the Nile rises, which we were all likewise obliged to do. We were allowed to drink the water but make no other use of it. None of the inhabitants of Geesh wash themselves, or their clothes, in the Nile, but in a stream that falls from the mountain of Geesh down into the plain of Assoa, which runs south, and meets the Nile in its turn northward, passing the country of the Gafats and Gongas.

The Agows, in whose country the Nile rises, are, in point of number, one of the most considerable nations in Abyssinia; when their whole force is raised,

which seldom happens, they can bring to the field 4000 horse, and a great number of foot; they were, however, once much more powerful; several unsuccessful battles, and the perpetual inroads of the Galla, have much diminished their strength. The country, indeed, is still full of inhabitants, but from their history we learn, that one clan, called Zeegam, maintained singly a war against the king himself, from the time of Socinios to that of Yasous the Great, who, after all, overcame them by surprise and stratagem; and that another clan, the Denguis, in like manner maintained the war against Facilidas, Hannes I. and Yasous II., all of them active princes. Their riches, however, are still greater than their power, for though their province in length is nowhere 60 miles, nor half that in breadth, yet Gondar and all the neighbouring country depend for the necessaries of life, cattle, honey, butter, wheat, hides, wax, and a number of such articles, upon the Agows, who come constantly in succession, a thousand and fifteen hundred at a time, loaded with these commodities, to the capital.'

As the dependence upon the Agows is for their produce rather than on the forces of their country, it has been a maxim with wise princes to compound with them for an additional tribute, instead of their military service; the necessities of the times have sometimes altered these wise regulations, and between their attachment to Fasil, and afterwards to Ras Michael, they have been very much reduced, whereby the state has suffered.

It will naturally occur, that, in a long carriage, such as that of a hundred miles in such a climate, butter must melt, and be in a state of fusion, consequently very near putrefaction; this is prevented by the root of an herb, called Moc-moco, yellow in colour, and in shape nearly resembling a carrot; this

they bruise and mix with their butter, and a very small quantity preserves it fresh for a considerable time; and this is a great saving and convenience, for, supposing salt was employed, it is very doubtful if it would answer the intention; besides, salt is money in this country, being circulated in the form of wedges, or bricks; it serves the purpose of silver coin, and is the change of gold; so that this herb is of the utmost use in preventing the increase in price of this necessary article, which is the principal food of all ranks of people in this country. Brides paint their feet likewise from the ancle downwards, as also their nails and palms of their hands, with this drug. I brought with me into Europe a large quantity of the seed, resembling that of coriander, and dispersed it plentifully through all the royal gardens: whether it has succeeded or not I cannot say.

Besides the market of Gondar, the neighbouring black savages, the woolly headed Shangalla, purchase the greatest part of these commodities from them, and many others, which they bring from the capital when they return thence; they receive in exchange elephant's teeth, rhinoceros horns, gold in small pellets, and a quantity of very fine cotton; of which goods they might receive a much greater quantity were they content to cultivate trade in a fair way, without making inroads upon those savages for the sake of slaves, and thereby disturbing them in their occupations of seeking for gold and hunting the elephant.

The way this trade, though very much limited, is established, is by two nations sending their children mutually to each other; there is then peace between these two families which have such hostages; these children often intermary; after which that family is understood to be protected, and at peace, perhaps for a generation: but such instances are rare, the natural

propensity of both nations being to theft and plunder; into these they always relapse; mutual enmity follows in consequence.

The country of the Agows, called Agow Midre*, from its elevation must be of course temperate and wholesome; the days, indeed, are hot, even at Sacala, and, when exposed to the sun, we are sensible of a scorching heat; but whenever you are seated in the shade, or in a house, the temperature is cool, as there is a constant breeze, which makes the sun tolerable even at mid-day, though we are here but 10° from the Line, or a few minutes more.

Though these Agows are so fortunate in their climate, they are not said to be long livers; but their precise age is very difficult to ascertain to any degree of exactness, as they have no fixed or known epoch to refer to; and, though their country abounds with all the necessaries of life, their taxes, tributes, and services, especially at present, are so multiplied upon them, whilst their distresses of late have been so great and frequent, that they are only the manufacturers of the commodities they sell, to satisfy these constant exorbitant demands, and cannot enjoy any part of their own produce themselves, but live in misery and penury scarce to be conceived. We saw a number of women, wrinkled and sun-burnt, so as scarce to appear human, wandering about under a burning sun, with one and sometimes two children upon their back, gathering the seeds of bent grass to make a kind of bread.

The cloathing of the Agows is all of hides, which they soften and manufacture in a method peculiar to

* The nation of Agows existed in the time of Cosmas Indoplaustes, who gives us the first notice of it. The archon of the Agau, mentioned by him, seems to have been their elective chief, or head-man, resembling the Bulko of the Galla.—E.

themselves, and this they wear in the rainy season, when the weather is cold; for here the rainy seasons are of long duration, and violent, which still increases the nearer you approach the Line, for the reasons I have already assigned. The younger sort are chiefly naked, the married women carrying their children about with them upon their backs. Their cloathing is like a shirt, down to their feet, and girded with a belt or girdle about their middle; the lower part of it resembles a large double petticoat, one ply of which they turn back over their shoulders, fastening it with a broach or skewer, across their breast before, and carry their children in it behind. The women are generally thin, and, like the men, below the middle size. There is no such thing as barrenness known among them. They begin to bear children before eleven; they marry generally about that age, and are marriageable two years before: they close child-bearing before they are thirty, though there are several instances to the contrary.

Dengui, Sacala, Dengla, and Geesh, are all called by the name of Ancasha, and their tribute is paid in honey. Quaquera and Azena pay honey likewise; Benja, honey and gold; Metakel, gold; Zeegam, gold. There comes from Dengla, a particular kind of sheep, called Macoot, which are said to be of a breed brought from the southward of the Line; but neither sheep, butter, nor slaves, make part of their tribute, being reserved for presents to the king, and great men.

Besides what they sell, and what they pay to the governor of Damot, the Agows have a particular tribute which they present to the king, one thousand dabra of honey, each dabra containing about sixty pounds weight, being a large earthen vessel. They pay, moreover, sixteen hundred oxen, and 1000 ounces of

gold: formerly the number of jars of honey was four thousand, but several of these villages being daily given to private people by the king, the quantity is diminished by the quota so alienated. The butter is all sold; and, since the fatal battle of Banja, the king's share comes only to about one thousand jars. The officer that keeps the accounts, and sees the rents paid, is called Agow Mizikir, accountant of the Agows; his post is worth one thousand ounces of gold; and by this it may be judged with what economy this revenue is collected. This post is generally the next to the governor of Damot, but not of course; they are separate provinces, and united only by the special grant of the king.

Although I had with me two large tents sufficient for my people, I was advised to take possession of the houses, to secure our mules and horses from thieves in the night, as also from the assaults of wild beasts, of which this country is full. Almost every small collection of houses has behind it a large cave, or subterraneous dwelling, dug in the rock, of a prodigious capacity, and which must have been the work of great labour. It is not possible, at this distance of time, to say, whether these caverns were the ancient habitation of the Agows, when they were Troglodytes, or whether they were intended for retreats upon any alarm of an irruption of the Galla into their country.

At the same time I must observe, that all the clans, or districts of the Agows, have the whole mountains of their country perforated in caves like these; even the clans of Zeegam and Quaquera, the first of which, from its power, arising from the populous state of the country, and the number of horses it breeds, seems to have no reason to fear the irregular invasions of naked and ill-armed savages, such as are the Galla. The country of Zeegam, however, which has but few

mountains, has many of these caverns, one range above another, in every mountain belonging to them. Quaquera, indeed, borders upon the Shangalla. As these are all foot, perfectly contiguous, and separated by the river, the caverns were probably intended as retreats for cattle and women against the attacks of those barbarians, which were every minute to be apprehended.

In the country of the Tcheratz Agow, the mountains are all excavated like those in Damot, although they have no Galla for their neighbours, whose invasions they need be afraid of. Lalibala, indeed, their great king and saint, about the twelfth century, converted many of these caves into churches, as if he had considered them as formerly the receptacles of Pagan superstition. At the same time, it is not improbable, that these caverns were made use of for religious purposes; that of Geesh, for instance, was probably, in former times, a place of secret worship paid to the river, because of that use it still is, not only to the inhabitants of the village, but to the assembly of the clans in general, who, after the ceremonies I have already spoken of, retire, and then perform their sacred rites, to which none but the heads of families in the Agows country are ever admitted.

When I shewed our landlord, Kefla Abay, the dog-star, (Syrius) he knew it perfectly, saying it was Sier*, it was the star of the river, the messenger or star of the convocation of the tribes, or of the feast; but I could not observe he ever prayed to it, or looked at it otherwise than one does to a dial, nor mentioned it with the respect he did the Abay; nor did he shew any sort of attention to the planets, or to any other star whatever.

* *Shcer*, a star; *Sira*, a planet; the last in Amharic.—E.

On the 9th of November, having finished my memorandum, relating to these remarkable places, I traced again, on foot, the whole course of this river, from its source to the plain of Goutto. I was unattended by any one, having with me only two hunting-dogs, and my gun in my hand. The quantity of game, of all sorts, especially the deer kind, was, indeed, surprising; but though I was, as usual, a very successful sportsman, I was obliged, for want of help, to leave each deer where he fell*. They sleep in the wild oats, and do not rise till you are about to tread upon them, and then stare at you for half a minute before they attempt to run off.

The only mention I shall make of the natural productions of this place, comes the more properly in here, as it relates to my account of the religion of this people. In the writings of the Jesuits, the Agows are said to worship *canes*†; but of this I could find no traces among them. I saw no plant of this kind in their whole country, excepting some large bamboo-trees. This plant, in the Agows language, is called Kirihaha. It grows in great quantities upon the sides of the precipice of the Geesh, and helps to conceal the cavern we have already mentioned; but though we cut several pieces of these canes, they shewed no sort of emotion, nor to be the least interested in what we were doing.

Our business being now done, nothing remained but to depart. We had passed our time in perfect harmony; the address of Woldo, and the great attachment of our friend Irepone, had kept our house

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* Mr Bruce killed during this journey, three species of the antelope tribe, the Madoqua, Fetcho, and Bohur.—E.

† See a very remarkable letter of Ras Sela Christos, to the emperor Socinios, in Balthazar Tellez, tom. 2. p. 496.

in a cheerful abundance. We had lived, it is true, too magnificently for philosophers, but neither idly nor riotously: and, I believe, never will any sovereign of Geesh be again so popular, or reign over his subjects with greater mildness. I had practised medicine gratis, and killed, for three days successively, a cow each day, for the poor and the neighbours. I had cloathed the high priest of the Nile from head to foot, as also his two sons, and had decorated two of his daughters with beads of all the colours of the rainbow, adding every other little present they seemed fond of, or what we thought would be agreeable. As for our amiable Irepone, we had reserved for her the choicest of our presents, the most valuable of every article we had with us, and a large proportion of every one of them; we gave her, besides, some gold; but she, more generous and noble in her sentiments than us, seemed to pay little attention to these that announced to her the separation from her friends; she tore her fine hair, which she had every day before braided in a newer and more graceful manner; she threw herself upon the ground in the house, and refused to see us mount on horseback, or take our leave, and came not to the door till we were already set out, then followed us with her good wishes and her eyes, as far as she could see or be heard.

I took my leave of Kefla Abay, the venerable priest of the most famous river in the world, who recommended me, with great earnestness, to the care of his god, which, as Strates humorously enough observed, meant nothing else than that he hoped the devil would take me. All the young men in the village, with lances and shields, attended us to Saint Michael Sacala, that is, to the borders of their country, and end of my little sovereignty.

REGISTER

OF THE

QUANTITY OF RAIN-WATER,

IN INCHES AND DECIMALS,

WHICH FELL AT GONDAR, IN ABYSSINIA, IN THE YEAR 1770, THROUGH A FUNNEL OF ONE FOOT ENGLISH IN DIAMETER.

	Inches.
The rain begun this year on the first of March: there fell in showers, that lasted only a few minutes, between the 1st of March and the last of April,	.039

MAY.

1.	From the 1st to the 6th,	.039
	From the 6th to the 8th,	.120
	From the 10th to the 12th it rained chiefly in the night,	.711
	From the 12th to the 14th,	.123
19.	At four in the afternoon a small shower, but heavy rain in the night,	.526
21.	At 7 o'clock in the evening a small shower, which continued moderately through the night,	.171

MAY.	*Inches.*
27. At 6 in the evening heavy rain for an hour.	.540
29. At 3 in the afternoon frequent showers of light rain. It continued one hour and thirty minutes,	.487
Total rain in May,	2.717

JUNE.

1. At 12 noon, light rain for 15 minutes, -	.028
2. Between 12 o'clock at night it has rained 30 minutes, in small showers, which lasted 5 or 6 minutes at a time, - - -	.049
4. At 8 in the morning slight showers for 30 minutes,	.149
5. Between 6 and 10 in the morning four small showers, that lasted 32 minutes, and at 12 a very gentle rain that lasted 15 minutes, - -	.031
10. It has rained very violently for 6 hours 30 minutes,	.342
11. Between 2 and 6 in the afternoon, at three several times, it has rained 20 minutes, -	.014
12. At noon a violent rain for 1 hour 30 minutes. At half past one in the afternoon, light rain for an hour. At four afternoon, light rain for 30 minutes. At half past six same afternoon, a very gentle rain for 3 hours. - -	.421
13. Between 4 and 5 afternoon it rained twice for 15 minutes, but not perceptible in the recipient, -	—
16. Between 2 and 6 afternoon it has rained three times smart showers, in all about twenty minutes,	.033
17. There fell in the night small rain for an hour, -	.002
18. At 1 afternoon there was a strong shower for 15 minutes. At half past 1 another for 45 minutes. Same day at 6 afternoon, it rained, at intervals, for 2 hours, - - -	.750
19. At half after 2 afternoon, it began to rain violently, with intervals. At night a slight shower for 20 minutes, - - -	.116
20. At twelve noon there was a very slight shower for 6 minutes. At half past 5, same day, a small shower that lasted 30 minutes. At 8 o'clock evening, it began to rain smartly, at intervals, for 4 hours,	.171
21. At a quarter past 11 it rained violently, with thunder and lightning, for about 2 hours. At half past 4	

JUNE.	*Inches.*
in the evening it rained, with intervals, in all about 45 minutes, - - -	.330
22. At half past 12 noon, it rained an hour -	.175
23. At one o'clock afternoon slight showers for 2 hours. Heavy rain in the night for 4 hours, - -	.358
25. At a quarter past one afternoon, a small shower, which lasted one hour 35 minutes. At night it rained one hour 30 minutes; heavy rain, with thunder and lightning, - - -	.552
26. At two in the afternoon, violent rain with intervals for 30 minutes. At half past 5 it rained for 30 minutes; and the beginning of the night for three hours, - - -	.233
27. At a quarter past twelve, a small shower for one hour 45 minutes, and at night a moderate shower, -	.302
28. At half past 12, a gentle rain. At 50 minutes after 12, violent. At two in the afternoon, very gentle rain for 15 minutes; and at 7, moderate rain for one hour and 30 minutes, - -	.290
29. At 1 in the afternoon, light rain; but a heavy rain must have fallen somewhere else, as the river Kahha is overflowed, - - -	.092
30. At noon a very gentle rain for 15 minutes, . -	.002
Total rain in June,	4.307

JULY.

1. At 20 minutes past eleven, strong rain for 30 minutes, with some showers through the night,	.306
2. At half past 11, a small shower for 30 minutes, and then, at 12, a violent shower, wind south-west, for 45 minutes, - - -	.792
3. It rained at 4 in the afternoon, and in the night,	.311
4. It rained from 12 to 2, and in the night likewise,	.390
5. It rained at noon, and some in the night, -	.029
7. It rained and hailed violently. It rained in the night likewise, - - - -	1.686
8. Light rain in the night, - - -	.033
9. Light rain for a few minutes, and no more all day; but the river Kahha has suddenly overflowed, and	

JULY.		*Inches.*
	there is appearance of rain on the Mountain of the Sun, Debra Tzai, &c. - - -	.017
10.	No rain, - - - - -	
11.	Ditto, - - - - -	
12.	At half an hour past noon it rained violently,	.422
13.	Violent rain at mid-day, and also in the night, -	1.185
14.	A few light showers night and day, - -	.054
15.	A small shower in the evening, and another in the night, - - - - -	.251
16.	No rain, - - - - -	
17.	A small shower at 1 in the afternoon, and flying showers throughout the day. It rained at 10 at night violently, - - - -	.658
18.	A gentle shower at noon, but continued raining in the night, - - - -	.463
19.	Light showers all the night, - -	.237
20.	It rained all night till 8 o'clock next morning,	.714
21.	Light showers in the afternoon, but violent rain in the night, - - -	1.329
22.	Light showers in the evening, - -	.174
23.	It rained one shower at half-past ten in the morning,	.107
24.	Light showers night and day, - -	.226
25.	Light rains and frequent, - -	.015
26.	Light showers throughout the evening, -	.081
27.	Light rains, - - -	.148
28.	Flying showers, - -	.070
29.	Ditto, - - -	.081
30.	Light showers, - -	.013
31.	Flying light showers night and day, -	.292
	Total rain in July,	10.089

AUGUST.

1.	Light rain in the afternoon, -	.056
2.	It rained in the night smartly, - -	.329
3.	It rained at noon violently, - -	1.318
4.	It rained from mid-day to evening, and some showers in the night, - - -	1.723
5.	At 2 in the afternoon it began to rain violently for 2 hours, - - -	1.041

August.	*Inches.*
6. Smart showers at different times in the evening and night,	.490
7. It rained in the night,	.580
8. Light rain in the night,	.053
9. Flying showers through the day, but for 6 minutes. Evening very violent,	.186
10. Smart showers in the evening and night,	.342
11 & 12. Frequent showers, with a high wind,	1.184
13 & 14. Light rain the first day, but violent on the second,	1.423
15. Fair all day, but rained at night,	475
16. Flying showers night and day,	.144
17. A very violent shower of short duration,	371
18 & 19. Several small showers,	.609
20 & 21. Frequent light showers,	.236
22 & 23. Constant rain,	1 502
24. Frequent showers in the evening,	.306
25 & 26. Constant rain,	1.763
27. Frequent showers,	.289
28. Ditto,	.280
29. It rained in the night,	.355
30. Ditto,	.302
31. Ditto,	.211
Total rain in August,	15.569

SEPTEMBER.

1. It rained in the night,	.079
2. Ditto,	.107
3 & 4. Frequent showers night and day,	.358
5 & 6. Ditto,	.568
7. It rained in the night only,	.213
8. No rain,	—
9. It rained violently for a few minutes at eight in the evening,	.055
10. No rain,	—
11. It rained in the night only,	.227
12. It rained smartly in the night,	.566
13. No rain,	—
14. Light showers in the day,	.042
15. Frequent showers night and day,	.159

SEPTEMBER.	*Inches.*
16. It rained a little in the night,	.132
18. No rain,	——
19. Ditto,	——
20. Flying showers night and day,	.263
21. No rain,	——
22. Ditto,	——
23. Some rain in the night,	.039
24. Ditto,	.026
25. The rain ceased,	——
Total rain in September,	2.834

N. B. This is the festival of the Cross in Egypt, when the inundation begins to abate. It rains no more in Abyssinia till towards the beginning of November, and then only for a few days; but these are the rains Abyssinia cannot want for their latter crops, and it was for these the Agows prayed when we were at the fountains of the Nile the 5th of November 1770*.

* A Journal of the weather and of the gradual increase of the Nile, during the two years Mr Bruce was in Abyssinia, is found among his papers. It is the work of one of his French acquaintances in that city. As the inundation in Egypt depends on the additional rains of several countries, which he did not visit, it is improper to enter into any detail of it with a view of comparison with the journal, which is given in this volume. The general result is, however, stated in his dissertation on the Nile, in the last chapter, and that preceding it.—E.

STATE

OF THE

QUANTITY OF RAIN-WATER,

WHICH FELL IN ABYSSINIA, AT KOSCAM, THE QUEEN'S PALACE, IN 1771, DURING THE RAINY MONTHS, THROUGH A FUNNEL OF ONE FOOT ENGLISH IN DIAMETER, AS IN THE PRECEDING YEAR 1770.

FEBRUARY.

	Inches.
23. This day it rained, for the first time, from a quarter before four o'clock afternoon to half past four ditto,	.003
28. It rained in the night one hour and a quarter,	.001

MARCH.

4. It rained in the night near two hours small rain,	.042
7. It rained a small shower in the evening,	.014
12. It rained three quarters of an hour this afternoon,	017
24. It rained and hailed violently for 18 minutes in the night,	.017
29. It rained an hour and a half in the afternoon,	.006
30. It rained hard in the night,	.504
Total rain in February and March,	.664

APRIL.

		Inches.
3.	It rained, or rather hailed, nine minutes,	
5.	It rained an hour in the afternoon,	.067
8.	Small rain, at intervals, throughout the afternoon,	.002
10.	It rained an hour in the night,	.003
30.	It rained one hour and a quarter in the night,	.013
	Total rain in April,	.085

MAY.

1.	From the 31st ult. to this day, at different times,	.330
3.	It rained hard in the night,	.355
6.	It has rained violently since three in the afternoon, wind S. E. variable,	.095
7.	It has rained heavily in the night, wind varying from N. to S. and S. W,	.368
8.	It rained small rain in the afternoon,	.042
11.	It has rained small rain this afternoon, wind N. W.	.002
14.	It has rained since yesterday at three all night, and till noon to-day,	.675
27.	From yesterday at two P. M. it rained to half past six, and heavily most part of the night, wind varying from N. to S.	.634
	Total rain in May,	2.501

JUNE.

1.	From yesterday at noon, in the night, and this day, wind W. S. W.	.212
3.	At night, south,	.002
5.	It rained in the night, S. W.	.223
6.	Ditto,	.006
9.	It rained in the night and afternoon, wind W. by S.	.725
10.	Ditto,	.463
11.	It rained in the night,	.343
13.	It rained from the 12th, at noon, to the 13th at ten, S. S. W.	1.265

JUNE.	*Inches.*
14. It rained from three till seven, - -	.120
15. It rained last night from sun-set till midnight, S.	.160
N. B. The 16th, at night, is the day the Egyptians say the Nile ferments, and is troubled, by falling of the nucta.	
18. After three days fair, wind fresh, N. it began to rain yesterday, and rained three quarters of an hour, wind varying from N. to W. - -	.490
19. It rained, with intervals, from four to ten last night, wind north, varying by east to south, and south-west, where it fell calm, and rained violently,	.530
20. It rained from a quarter before six, till ten at night, wind at north, fresh; changed to east, then to south, and there fell calm; violent thunder and lightning, - - - -	.635
21. It began to rain yesterday at three, and rained till near five; wind changed from north to south, and fell calm; cleared with wind at north, -	.556
22. It began to rain at three, and rained till five; wind changed from north to east, then to south, and fell calm; cleared with wind at north; fair all night,	.149
25. It has been fair till yesterday evening: at three it began raining, and rained till five this morning, a few drops, wind north, - -	.067
26. It rained small rain at several times yeterday afternoon, and a few drops this morning, wind north, calm; at ten it came to south and then to west,	.120
27. It rained yesterday afternoon from four to five; wind changed from north to west, but speedily returned to north, fresh, - - - -	.054
28 & 29. It rained the 27th in the afternoon, and in the night, wind at north. Yesterday it rained small rain all day till five, and cleared in the night, with wind at north, - - -	.268
Total rain in June,	6.388

JULY.

1. There fell small showers the night of the 29th and of the 30th, - - - -	.093

JULY.	*Inches.*
3. There fell a small shower the second in the afternoon, and last night hard,	.267
4. It rained small rain at noon. From two, and all night, heavy and constant rain. It thundered from noon till three,	.373
5. It rained all yesterday afternoon, and by intervals, till nine at night. Small rain this morning; calm; W. S. W. and S. W.	.423
6. It rained yesterday afternoon and in the night: S. W. N. B. The 6th of July is the first of the month Hamlie, and of the Egyptian month Abib. On this day they first begin to cry the Nile's increase in the streets of Cairo. The night before, or 30th of Senne, is called at Cairo the Eide el Bishaara, or the eve of good news, because, after having measured at the Mikeas, they come and tell at Cairo that to-morrow they begin to count the Nile's rising.	.489
7. It rained from two in the afternoon till four, and from ten till midnight,	.318
10. It rained yesternight, and in the afternoon and night the day before,	.289
11. It rained till yesterday afternoon: in the night a violent shower that lasted 39 minutes; wind south by west,	1.162
12. It rained a little from two to three in the afternoon, but in the night violently for a short time,	.319
13. It rained yesterday from three quarters past twelve till midnight; W. S. W. calm,	.912
14. It rained all yesterday afternoon till midnight,	.739
15. It rained the 14th in the afternoon, and the 15th a few showers through the day	.816
16. It rained in the night, and small rain in the afternoon,	.290
17. It rained in the afternoon two showers, and in the night a little; S. W.	.212
19. It rained in the afternoon the 17th and 18th, and the 18th only in the night,	.912
20. It rained yesterday from two till half-past ten constant rain, and the hail lay all the afternoon on the hills S. E. of the town; very cold wind; S. by W.	1.371

JULY.	*Inches.*
21. & 22. It rained but one small shower the 20th, the 21st it rained little in the afternoon, but hard in the night,	1.185
24. It rained in the morning of yesterday only, fair in the afternoon; to-day, in the morning, fair in the night,	.766
25. It rained all yesterday afternoon, and all this morning small rain, but none in the night,	.452
28. From the 25th in the afternoon to this day at noon,	2.137
29. From the 28th at noon to the 29th it rained in the first part of the night, but was fair all afternoon and this morning,	.267
From the 29th at noon, to the 31st at ditto,	.568
Total rain in July,	14.360

AUGUST.

1. It rained yesterday afternoon, but in the night little. To-day fair,	.544
4. It rained only the third in the evening, and night and this morning,	1.188
5. It rained yesterday evening and in the night, till noon little,	.544
6. It rained yesterday afternoon, and all night and a little this morning,	.250
8. It was fair these two days, and only rained one hard shower last night,	.178
9. It rained last night only, was fair all day, and is this morning,	.214
10. It rained yesterday all the afternoon, and the first of the night. To-day fair,	.869
11. It rained in the night yesterday; all day and this morning fair,	.188
12. It rained a small shower yesterday afternoon, and in the night a little,	.268
13. It rained yesterday at three a hard shower, and a little in the night,	.308
14. It rained a few drops in the day, and a hard shower at night,	.360
15. It rained a hard shower near three, and at ten at night,	.386
16. In the night,	.027
17. It rained hard several times in the evening and night,	.831

AUGUST.	*Inches.*
18. It rained hard yesterday afternoon, and in the night,	.329
19. It rained all day, but not hard,	.491
20. It rained in the afternoon only,	.010
21. Ditto,	.097
22. It was fair all yesterday, and rained only a hard shower at nine,	.424
23. It rained hard at noon, and the evening, with little intervals, till nine at night, and again this morning at sun-rise till seven,	1.148
24. It did not rain yesterday,	
25. It rained an hour between two and three,	.332
26. It rained a small shower yesterday, and none in the night,	.005
27. It rained a hard shower at four, and this day at 12 morning, the night clear,	.268
28. It rained hard yesterday at two for a few minutes,	.201
29. It rained a hard shower for near an hour, after two, but clear all night and this morning,	.450
30. & 31. It rained a small shower the 30th, and heavily for a quarter of an hour the 31st, at night, at ten,	.109
Total rain in August,	10,010

SEPTEMBER.

2. It rained yesterday a hard shower in the evening, and at ten at night,	.664
3. It rained only a few drops, which did not appear in the funnel,	
4. It rained from noon till sun-set yesterday, with hail and violent thunder: night fair,	1.710
N. B. It is observed at Gondar, the Pagomen is always rainy. It begins this year the 4th, and consists of six days, being Leap Year.*	
5. It rained yesterday all afternoon, small rain,	.009

* I examined the original Journals written at Koscam, and find the notes made in them at that time by Mr Bruce. It also appears from these, that he was ill, and confined to his bed from the 7th to the 15th August. The Journals are written during August, September, and October, in a very feeble and careless hand.

SEPTEMBER.	*Inches.*
6. It rained yesterday all afternoon, and small rain in the night till ten,	.306
7. It rained from before noon till four, small rain; the night fair. Wind high at north,	.846
8. It rained from noon for an hour, small rain,	.214
9. It rained a small shower at noon; clouds drive from east to west; wind north,	.107
10. St John's day, no rain *,	
11. It rained from noon till five o'clock, wind W. cold; clouds drive from east and west,	1.135
12. It rained a smart shower a little before noon. Clouds drive from east and from west,	.214
13. It rained a small shower a little after noon. Cold and calm. Clouds drive from east and west,	.035
14. It rained small rain from noon to three, and hard from eleven till near midnight,	.344
15. It was fair all yesterday, but rained hard for a few minutes at seven, and also a little before midnight, from the east,	.186
16. No rain to day,	
18. It rained a small shower last night, and to-day at noon,	.053
19. It rained and hailed violently in the afternoon,	1.096
Total rain in September,	7.338

The rain totally ceased the 19th, none having fallen from this day to the 25th.

Saint John's day is the time observed for the rains beginning to abate.

N. B. At the 5th of October the people were all crying for rain; the ground all in cracks, and teff in the blade burnt up.

* St John the Baptist's day is always the first day of Muscaram or New-Year's-day in Abyssinia. It is with diffidence that I venture to state my doubts as to the accuracy of the account given in this Journal of the Pagomen, the leap year, and other Abyssinian dates in 1771. By help of a very good kalendar brought from Habbesh by Mr Salt, with which I have compared the dates throughout the whole history of Abyssinia from Icon Amlac to King Joas, I find that the year 1771 was the third after leap year in the kalendar, or the year 7263 of the world. See more on this subject in the preface to the Chronological Table.

TOTAL *of* RAIN *that fell in* ABYSSINIA, *in the Years* 1770 *and* 1771, *in the Rainy Month.*

GONDAR. 1770.		KOSCAM. 1771.	
	Inches.		*Inches.*
March & April,	.039	February, & March,	.664
May,	2.717	April,	.085
June,	4 307	May,	2.501
July,	10 089	June,	6.388
August,	15.569	July,	14 360
September,	2.834	August,	10.019
		September,	7.338
	35.555		41.355

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS IV. V. AND VI.

No. I.

Transactions at Gondar, and Journey to the Sources of the Nile.

THE reader, in the course of the two last volumes, must have become acquainted with the latter part of the history of Abyssinia, and the state of that kingdom when Mr Bruce arrived in it. A particular account of the MSS. from which he extracted his information respecting the reigns of the sovereigns, from Yasous Tallac till the murder of Hannes II., May 1769, will be found in the end of volume VII. It is sufficient at present to observe, that Michael, the governor of Tigre, had, by force of arms and intrigue, conquered both the Kuaragna and Galla parties, which had successively ruled the nation since the death of Bacuffa. A rare combination of circumstances, that seldom takes place, secured the throne to the Itegue, and her son Yasous, at his accession a child of only eight years of age. His reign, though neither very glorious nor active, was sufficiently able to maintain the obedience of the distant provinces, which his premature death, and the prejudices of his son, instantly threw into confusion.

Three irreconcileable factions rose to contend for the favours and direction of the crown, all of them dangerous to its interest and authority. The Kuaragna, headed at first by Welled Ieoul, the queen's brother, and afterwards by Kasmati Eshte, and others of her relations, had long been superior to all the rest, on account of their affinity to the queen, and the active measures they had taken for the protection of her government. The Galla, a race which the policy of former kings had endeavoured to render useful to their natural enemies the Abyssinians, by dividing their interests, and changing their habitations, religion, and manners, found easy access to patronage and power under Joas, the grandson of a Galla chief, whose daughter had been imprudently married to the young king of Abyssinia. The third party, the natives of Tigre, united under Michael, a cruel, ambitious, and rebellious warrior, was inferior, in number and interest, to any of the rest; but far more formidable than they, on account of the abilities of its leader, the skill and command of fire-arms, which it had obtained by situation, and the opportunity of rushing in from a distance on the more powerful parties, after they had exhausted their strength in mutual conflict.

Michael surnamed Suhul, or the Sharp, an epithet reckoned very expressive of his character, was the fifth in lineal descent from the celebrated Ayto Robel, Shum of Selawe, who promoted the league with the Portuguese. His mother was the grand-daughter of Delba Yasous, Ka[illegible] the father of Oustas the Usurper. The name of his father was Welled Hezekias, who seems to have lived and died in obscurity in the province, as his name is not mentioned in any high station under the princes of his time. Michael was accustomed to boast of his nobility by the mother's side without taking notice of his paternal extraction*. His youth was spent in the civil commotions of Tigre, [illegible]

* The Genealogy of Michael is given in the MS. Tarikh, or history of his transactions, as follows: By the father's side, Ayto Robel, Shum of Selawe, Ayto Arâme, Ayto Lebasi, Welled Hawaryat, Welled Hezekias, Suhul Michael. By the mother's side, Delba Yasous, Azaze Jacob, then Jacob's daughter, Eshet Mariam, who bore the Ras. By Welleta Gabriel, Michael had Welled Hawaryt, and Welled Kedane. Mr Salt in 1805 was informed, that the Ras died in 1780, in the 88th year of his age. See Lord Valentia's Travels, Vol. III. p. 164.

from the seat of government, always turbulent on account of the dissensions among the rulers of the several districts, and the habits of war and robbery which the natives had acquired since the period of the Turkish invasion. From a dependant on the governor, he at last became the leader of a party, that employed itself during war in the ordinary adventures of Abyssinian campaigns, and during peace in robbery and depredation, in order to preserve its existence. After the death of Bacuffa, Tigre was divided amongst several noblemen, some of whom had nearly renounced obedience to the crown. Woldo, Kasmati of Enderta, had long established himself in the province by force, having put to death all the governors of Tsegade, Samen, and the inferior districts; and so distant were his affections from the service of the king, that he had remitted to Gondar only a scanty tribute, and had not appeared there since the reign of David IV. Michael was the only antagonist he had not subdued. This rising enemy had received from the Iteghe and her son the government of Adowa, which had been taken from Basha Retu about the year 7223, in which Michael, in a short time, fortified himself so strongly, as to defy the ambition of Woldo, and expel him from the northern part of the province. As his district bordered upon the territory of the Naybe of Masuah, Michael obtained from him whatever supplies he demanded, and suffered no person to enter Abyssinia in that quarter without his permission. He quarrelled with the Abuna and the clergy of Axum, whose lands he immediately seized, and brought a person from Jidda to perform the duties of primate in his government, on condition of allowing himself to possess the lands of the church. In consequence of this and other rebellious practices, Michael was besieged on Debra Samayat, a strong mountain in Tigre, by Yasous with his whole army, and taken prisoner in the month of Ter, A. M. 7239 (A. D. 1747.) Having made his peace with the king, he was appointed Kasmati of all Tigre, in Tekemt, A. M. 7242 (A. D. 1749), at Gondar, to the complete exclusion of Kasmati Woldo, who had offended the crown. Reduced to extremity, Woldo armed in his defence the Tultal Doba and Galla of Angot, but with little success, for Michael pursued him with incessant battle into the remotest corner of his government. The king, anxious to secure the

tranquillity of his subjects, next year, at the end of the rains, crossed the Tacazze, and brought Michael, Woldo, and his ally Denguish, to Gondar by the way of Axum; and, retaining them several months at court, endeavoured to reconcile them by every artifice in his power. All his wishes were totally ineffectual. They were dismissed in Miaizay, 7243 (April 1751,) and by the end of the rains were again in arms. Kasmati Woldo fell on the 19th Ter, 7244, before the royal army, which was marching with haste to separate him and his enemy, arrived in Tigre. Michael, by this event, obtained full command over the whole province, and was confirmed each succeeding year till the death of Yasous, 21st Sene, 7247. Notwithstanding the rainy season, and the distance of his province, the Kasmati of Tigre arrived at Gondar on the 24th, to assist at the coronation of Joas, a child of seven years old, whom his grandmother placed on the throne. About two months after, the queen's third daughter, Ozoro Altash, was married to his son, Welled Hawaryat, lately created Bajerund, which established his alliance with the royal family. On the 21st Sene, 7249 (June 1757), Michael again hastened to Gondar, in order to maintain his interest against Ayo, governor of Begemder, who had resolved to give up his places in favour of his son, Mariam Barea, a young nobleman of great accomplishments, and therefore a dangerous competitor for the royal favour, in the opinion of a man who aimed at the government of the whole kingdom. Ayo arrived on the 23d of Maskarim, 7250; but Michael had procured for himself the province of Samen, which lies between Tigre and Begemder, and in this he was invested on the eighth day of the following month. Possessing a frontier country once ruled by his enemies, he lived for ten years in a state of hostility with Mariam Barea, who was governor of Begemder, and nearly connected in the royal family by his marriage with the queen's daughter, Ozoro Esther, the young widow of Netcho, Kasmati of Tchirkin. Esther, whose name appears so often in these volumes as the friend of the author, was married to Netcho soon after his appointment to the government of Tsegade, Walkait, and Raselfil, which took place on the 27th Tahsas, A. M. 7243 (Dec. 1750.). She was taken from him, before his defeat and death, by the queen, and given to Ayo Mariam Barea,

on the 21st of Tekemt, 7253 (Oct. 1750). With this unfortunate nobleman she lived till his death, and threw herself, on the 29th of Ter, 7261 (Feb. 1769), into the arms of the bitter enemy of her husband's family, to the ruin of the king and his Galla kindred, who had murdered him with circumstances of the greatest cruelty. Before this singular event, Michael had nearly obtained the height of his ambition. He had been created Ras, 11th Mascaram, 7260, in place of the queen's brother, Ras Welled Ieoul, who had died on the 20th Megabit, 7259; and he was confirmed in the office of Betwudet immediately before setting out for the campaign of Begemder. His course after that was stained with every pollution of treason and murder. He defeated the army of his master at Fenter, Miaizay 25th, 7261 (April 1769), entered Gondar in triumph, and having brought Hannes, the brother of Bacuffa, from Wechne, caused the king to be assassinated at midnight, Monday, 8th of Ginbot, the same year. Hannes being unable to act, through age and infirmity of mind, the Ras secretly ordered him to be poisoned, after a reign of seven months, in Hedar, 7262 (Oct. 1769.) Tecla Haimânout, the son of Hannes, was placed on the throne, a boy of fifteen years of age, older indeed than many of the former kings at their accession, but sufficiently young to serve the purposes of his elector *.

Such is the history, or rather the dates, of the principal events in the life of the man who was all-powerful in Abyssinia at the time of Mr Bruce's arrival at Masuah. He left that place, Nov. 10, 1769, and came to Gondar, Feb. 15th, 1770. The king and the Ras were absent in the campaign against Fasil Waragna, and Mr Bruce lived in the Mahometan town with Hagi Salch, or at Koscam, till they returned, on the 2d of March, when he saw them for the first time. It may not be improper to transcribe from his common-place book the account of their entrance, and the opinion he at first conceived of the Ras. It was written after going home,

* The Ethiopic dates are taken from the MS. Annals of Abyssinia, Vol. V.; the corresponding month and year, according to the European calculation, are given as nearly as the inequality of the two modes of computation will admit of. See the Chronological Table in the end of Vol. VII.

at a time when he had not received any favours from Michael, nor known him sufficiently to form an estimate of his real character. It abounds in Arabic names of Abyssinian offices and places, on account of the author's having received his information from the Mahometans; and the orthography is not so correct as he afterwards made it.

"The 2d of March we went to meet the king on his march to Gondar. The Vizir (Ras) came first, with about a hundred horse, mounted upon a mule. He first stopt and made a short prayer at the church of Azazo, and then came to a small hill on the other side of the river Dumaza, which runs below Azazo, that is near Gondar. His mule ran so fast, and he was so poorly dressed, that, though we were dismounted to wait for him, he past us without our being able to salute him. Having past the Dumaza, he sat himself down on a small rising ground to see the army pass, while they were pitching his tent. The army advanced by twos and threes, all in disorder; part encamped, the rest entered Gondar. There was no order observed. We first pulled off our shoes, and then kissed his hand, sitting down as he desired us. After the Vizir came the King, with about an hundred horse, with forty drums, mounted on mules, beating before him; and long horns, or trumpets, after the fashion of the country. Upon the King's passing we all rose; so did the Vizir, and stood till he was past. On the other hand, the King seeing him standing, hastened to pass that he might sit again, for he was above 80 years old, and was besides lame, his thigh being broke in his youth by a wound from a lance. The King entered his tent, and the Vizir his; where, after he had changed his dress, put on a muslin striped shirt, and ordered (curled) his hair in the fashion of his country, we were again admitted. He was sitting on a sofa; on each side of him were his great men, and particularly Kasta and Gueta, just then reconciled to him, with all the rest of the late king's party, that were called Kuaragna, as being from the province of Kuara, the country of the Queen-mother. Gueta had paid 1000 ounces of gold for this peace. The Vizir was tall, not very black, his hair and beard as white as snow, the first of which he dressed however after the mode of young men, and though 80 years of age, his face appeared like a man of 60. His face did not bespeak the man of parts

he was, for it had a great share of silliness, and his whole manner was exceedingly clownish and brutish. He asked my country's name, if I was a Christian, and if a Frank; to which we answered as we found our advantage. After a very small stay we went out of his tent to that of the officer's next adjoining, to learn the particulars of the late battle. The King's tent is of red cloth; long, pent-house like at top, within brocade. Before the King were carried three standards, being each a large ball silver-gilt, surmounted by a cross, carried on a long staff, and below the ball a small flag of three points, blue, red, and green, about two feet long, without device. The King rode upon a mule all covered with scarlet, and blue housing; his head bare, with a fine linen or muslin cloth wrapped around him, which he held with one hand up to his mouth. We were too far off to discern his features; and the Vizir being very busy, we did not take his leave to see him in his tent. Three of the Queen's daughters, one of whom, the widow of Mariam Barca, was now the Vizir's wife, came after, riding upon mules like men, their faces half uncovered, with parasols like a *dais* carried over their heads, as was likewise over the heads of the Vizir and King. All the clergy came flocking to visit him, amongst the rest the monks of Koscam, with two standards like the former, and two silver drums; the Gumenos and two other priests, with their mitres and pontificals. They stopped before the tent about 100 yards, and began to sing hymns, after finishing which they were admitted. The Vizir, soon after his murder of the King, put the Gumenos in irons, being very rich by the Queen's bounties, and did not release him till he had paid 500 ounces of gold, equal to 5000 patakas*.

"The 3d in the morning, the King made his entry. Before him came part of the troops, horse and foot, without any order, about 4000, who joined themselves to about 500 horse, and the same number of musqueteers, of the Vizir of Tigre, who had before occupied the square before the King's house. After came the King, wrapped up to the nose in the

* The Greeks call the prior of a convent or church Gumenos or Hegumenos. The Abyssinian term is Memeher.

white cloth they wear, having three standards and 40 drums before him, and a *dais* carried over his head. After him were carried the *dais* used in the celebration of divine service in his tent or camp. Behind these, at a very small distance, was the Viceroy of Tigre; before him was carried a silver rod, with several rings of gold, and a gold ball on the top of it, the ensign of his office. After him came the King's musqueteers, and the different Casmati's, or governors of provinces, Gusho of Amhara, Wondy Powussen (Wundu-bewusen) of Begamidre, and Kuflo Yesous, newly made governor of Samen in the room of Ayto Tesfo, who had caballed, and still kept possession of Samen. All the soldiers who had killed an enemy distinguished themselves by a narrow stripe of red cloth upon his lance or musket; if he had slain more he carried more, and round his wrist he had the privy parts of his enemies killed, stuffed with straw, which, as soon as the King was seated, he threw down, each in his turn, before him, with encomiums on his own bravery; and this is the never failing practice, even when a woman is regent, as was the late Queen in the minority of Joas and his father Yasous. The different viceroys were distinguished by particular ornaments on their heads, short waistcoats and short breeches of silk stuffs of Scio, and a silver shield. Gusho was married to the Queen's daughter, Ozoro Altash*, and after to a daughter of the Viceroy of Tigre. Wondy Powussen, who had distinguished himself in the late fight, was to be married to a daughter of Ras Michael's son, Welled Hayrat (Hawaryat), by Ozoro Altash, daughter of the late Queen. He had been one of the principal Shums of Mariam Barea, and upon his master's death had taken refuge in the Ras's tent from the fury of Lupo (Lubo), and had grown up into great favour by the protection of the Queen's daughter, Mariam Barea's wife, who, after her husband's death, had been married to Ras Michael, according to the manner of marrying in the country. Among the trophies was the skin of Woosheka, Lupo's servant, who had been flead by order of

* This should be Wellet a-Israel. The *dais* carried over their heads is called debáb or tedubábia. The silver rod is called zanga; the bloody trophies shubshub or alegat; the ornaments on their heads shufshuft or kirn zawerk.—*Ed.*

the Ras, stuffed, and ordered to be hung upon the large tree before the King's house, which seemed to disgust the people."

The Common-place Book after this gives a journal of the health of the Ras, who seems to have been afflicted with various kinds of diseases, bodily, moral, and political, during the time that Mr Bruce stayed in Gondar, before his removal to Emfras. The bulletin is as follows:

"March 11th. Waited on the Ras that day. Duho came with an insulting message from Fasil about Boro da Gogo. Powussen received on that day his wife's portion, 100 carpets, 100 guns, 100 mules, 100 oxen with their ploughing instruments, besides 1000 other oxen and cows. The goods were all brought into the presence chamber; the Ozoros and the Queen sent also guns, knives, and the ras-werk, or diadem, they wear upon their heads. March 7th. Wondy Wusen came to Koscam, and carried * his bride to his tent and army at Azazo; and on the 8th set out with Gusho home. Boro da Gogo had been left Kasmati of Gojam by Michael against Waragna. 9th. Arrived Nanna Georgis, Sheikh of the Agows, with little gold. Damot and Maitsha had refused to pay the miry. He departed home on the 12th. March 11th This evening the Ras had a complaint in his knee, which was the occasion of his sending for me; he was easier the two succeeding days, having rubbed it with spirits of wine and camphor, which I gave him. He seemed averse to using all remedies, and refused taking any, except those which I tasted before him. 13 and 14. Very uneasy at bad accounts from Gojam, and repenting his having returned contrary to his own opinion. The 15th he had a pain in his side, which continued till the 18th, when he proposed to be cupped, but changed his mind; he looked ill, but had no fever; it seemed fretting at the defeat of the Agows. 19th, Word came of Boro's defeat; the Ras very ill, but would take no remedies; on the same day arrived a man from Fasil, who said that he had flead two men alive for the death of Woosheka (found out to be false); that Aylo of Gojam had made peace; that Boro da Gogo had married a daughter of Welled Guetan (Kedân), son of Ras Michael: Boro had

* This is a ceremony used at marriages. The husband carries the bride on his back to his own house, or at least round that of her father.

formerly married a daughter of Casmati Eshte. 20th. Ras Michael, though visibly worse, in revenge for Boro, ordered the eyes of 44 Galla to be pulled out at the tent of Kufla Yesous, Kasmati of Tigre.* 21st. The Ras much the same. 22d. Still nobody admitted; will take no medicine but melted butter. 23d. Still ill; nobody admitted; reports go that Nanna Girgis is either beaten or revolted, but this false."

The journal is continued on till the meeting with the King at Lamgue in May, and from that time to the robbery at Dara by Guebra Mehedin and his party.

In Balugani's Italian Journal, this adventure is stated as follows:

Maggio 20. "A 10. mat. Siamo a $\frac{1}{4}$ miglio sotto di Dara overo sotto la montagna ove è situato Dara. In questo luogho siamo stati surpresi per una truppa di ladri servitori di Ghebra Medin che sotto titulo di amici è servitori di Casmati Wuel de Ussen, si anno circondati in copioso numero e spogliati di tutto che noi portavimo. A un ora di camino di questo luogho tenendo il suddetto corso, per un vallone assai stretto, pieno di bosco, e di alberi molto curiosi, siamo andati a Dara in un villeggio di Turchi, nella casa di Cadrass Mahemet." At ten in the morning we are about half a mile under Dara, or rather under the mountain where Dara is situated. In that place we have been surprised by a troop of robbers, servants of Gebra Mehedin, who, under pretence of being friends and servants of Casmati Wendy-wusen, have surrounded us in great numbers, and spoiled us of every thing which we were carrying. At an hour's journey from that place, holding the same course, we have come through a very strait valley, full of wood, and very curious trees, to Dara, a village of Turks, into the house of Negusserus Mahomet.

An account of this robbery is also given in Mr Bruce's common-place book, with the history of the war from that time till the taking of Michael in 1771.

Of the journey to the sources, there exist, besides the narrative in Mr Bruce's own words, written as he went along, the complete journal by Balugani in Italian, and many of the stripes of paper which he carried in his hand, on which he

* This should be Samen. The whole account is curious, though a little incorrect, as being early and rapidly written.

wrote with a pencil the history of each day before he entered it in the journal at night. If it were necessary to confirm the accuracy of Mr Bruce's account by any additional evidence, these might be inserted here; but the reader may consider the following as a specimen of the whole journal, and estimate, by one of the most interesting passages, the accuracy of the rest. It is the diary of Tuesday and Wednesday, 30th and 31st October 1770; in the night of the first of which they met with Fasil at Bamba.

A 2¾ dato fondo a Bababaha.

30 Martedi. A 6 ore. mat. salpato, per W. S. W.

A 6¼ passato il rio Saroccha, questo corre N. e S.

A 7 ore, per S. W. Tanchal restava alla destra 3½ migl.; qui cominciamo secondare il lago, a sinistra, Cochau nella strada.

Tchiemmera a destra a W. N. W. a 4½ m. distanza.

A 9¼ reposato a Delghi Mariam di qui la montagna Goi Mariam restava, per S. W. Mescalaxos restava, per S. S. W. Di Saroccha fino a Goi Mariam tutto e Tacussa. Cuara restava, per W. S. W. Goltuchia villagio dove si fa gran bazzar, il paese e di Casmati Mamo, al S. b W. resta Dinghelber e Dara S. E. b S. Coscamo, per N. E. b E.

A 10¾ Salpato, per S. W.

A 11 Amico, villagio, 2 migl. a destra.

11¼ Dato fondo e riposato

A ¼ Sera, Salpato, per S. W.

A ½ Andamo, per S. S. W.

A 1 ora. Caduss Michele a destra ¾ miglio.

A 1½ Chidena Mariet, Meskelaxos sono due isole piccole ¾ miglio di dist. A qui l'Abaj resta al S. S. E.

A 1¾ traversato il rio ——.

A 2 Passato per Mescalaxos che restava sopra una piccola montagna: a poco doppo passato altro rio che si chiame Cimon; di questo luogo la bocca del Nilo è per S. S. W.

A 2¼ Salpato del riposo per S. b W.

A 3½ Traversato un grande rio che conduceva poca aqua ma chiara si chiama ——.
A 4½ riposato nel vallone sotto Ambaba
A 5 represo il camino, e dato fondo a Ambaba a 5½

18½ ore. = 18 migl.

31 Mercordi. In questo giorno abbiamo ritrovato il Rass Faccil campato nel vallone dove avevimo reposato, l'ultima volta, il giorno avanti. Il Rass era arrivato in questo luogo, verso le 7 della sera antecedente, e restato tutta la notte. Nella mattina a ricevuto noi con cortesia, mi ha regalato un cavallo, e dato un uomo chiamato Scialaka Woldo per proseguire il nostro viaggio alle fontane.

A 10½ matt. salpato per S. b W.
A 11¼ riposato al rio Sorghi; corre per S. W. and N. E.
A 12 passato il rio di Dinghelber, corre come quello di sopra.
A 1¼ ora, arrivato alla chiesa, a Dinghelber alla casa del Rass. In questo luogo il lago e a ¾ de miglio lontano, ma è la profondita del golfo, poiche dalle 11 del giorno passato lo abbiamo sempre lasciato lontano circa 2 miglie e ritrovato qui a Dinghelber. Di Dinghelber li vedono, Emfras, per E. b N. Dara, per E. S. E. Dek, E. b S. l'Abaj uscito di lago, S. E. b E. Gonder, per N. E. Amidamid, per S. E. Sakalla, per S. b E. Guesghi, per S. S. W.

2½ or. = 7 migl.

The translation of which is given in the note *

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* On the 29th landed at Bababaha.

Tuesday 30th, at 6 o'clock, A. M. set out, W. S. W. At 6½, passed the river Sarocca, which runs N. and S. At 7, travelled S. W. Tenkel remained on our right 3½ miles distant. Here we began to coast along the lake; on our left Cochaou, on the road; Tchemmera is on our right, 4½ miles off. At 9½ rested at Delghi Mariam, whence the mountain Goi-Mariam bore S. W. Mescalaxos bore S. S. W. From Sarocca to Goi-Mariam all is Tocusso. Kuara bore W. S. W. Goltucca, a village where there is a great market, the country belonging to Kasmati Mammo, bears S. by W. Dingleber and Dara bear S. E. b S. Koscam, N. E. b E. At 10½ set out S. W. At 11, Arrico, a village on our right, 2 miles off. 11½, Stopped to rest. At ¼ one P. M. set out, S. W. At

In the same manner the journal continues till their arrival at the fountains of the Nile. The journal of Sunday, November 4th, the day on which they reached Geesh, is as follows:

Domenica 4. di Novembre salpato di Davola a 8 ore, per E. S. E. a 8¼ passato un piccolo rio che viene di N. che si chiama Gugeri, quì abbiamo cominciato a montare lasciando il vallone alla destra, andando per S. E. e sempre costeggiando per E. S. E. A 8 traversato un torrente chiamato Carnaciuli, viene di N. E.[3] Entrano tutti li due in Davola. Ora siamo in mezzo di vallone ——. A 9 ore, traversato il rio Caccino, e riposato. Viene di N. A 9½ Salpato per S. S. E. e 5 minute doppo, traversato il rio Davola. Costeggiando la montagna destra abbiamo passato a 20 passi un piccolo torrente che discende di questa montagna e viene di S. Abbiamo lasciato il rio Davola che corre nel vallone a sinistra, venendo di E. S. E. A 10¼ corso S. b E. Afformasha montagna della quale casca un rio; e a sin sera, più lontanta è al-

¼ one we travelled S. S. W. At 1, Kedus Michael was on our right, ½ mile distant. At 1½, Kedame Aret and Mescalaxos, two small islands in the lake, ½ mile distant. Here the Abay bore S. S. E. At 1¾ crossed the river ——. At 2 passed by Mescalaxos, that stood on a little hill; and a short time after crossed another river called Comon: from that place the outlet of the Nile from the lake is S. S. W. At 2¼ set out from our resting place S. by W. At 3½ crossed a large river that had little water, but it was clear, called ——. At 4½ rested in the large valley (vallone) beneath Bamba. At 5 took the road, and landed at Bamba at 5½ o'clock. The sum of the day's journey 8½ hours, valued at 18 miles.

Wednesday 31st October. On this day we have found Ras Fasil encamped in the valley, in which we rested, the last time, yesterday. The Ras had arrived here about seven o clock last evening, and remained the whole night. In the morning he has received us with favour, has made me a present of a horse, and given us a man called Shalaka Woldo to guide us in our journey to the fountains.

At 10½ A. M. set out S. b W. At 11¼ rested at the river Sorghi, which runs S. W. and N. E. At 12 crossed the river of Dingleber, which runs in the direction of the preceding. At 1¼ arrived at the church at Dingleber, at the house of the Ras (Fasil). In this place the lake is ¼ of a mile distant, but it is the bottom of the gulf, for, from 11 o'clock yesterday, it has always been about two miles from us, and we have fallen in with it here again at Dingleber. From Dingleber are seen Emfras, bearing E b. N. Dara, E. S. E. Dek, E. b S.; the Nile coming out of the lake S. E. b S. Gondar N. E. Amidamid mountains S. E. Sacchala S. b E. Guesgue S. S. W.

tra montagna a 2 miglia E. (e un altro rio piu grande) chiamata Ligiambra. Piu lontano è la montagna Amidamid, tutte nella stessa direzione. Li due ultimie rii sono Davola. A 11 siamo circa al somma della montagna. Nostro corso e S. b E. e abbiamo passato a canto la chiesa di Mariam. A 11¼, per S. S. E. siamo sopra la montagna. Tutto il paese alla destra e al S. W. e Saccala. La chiesa di Mariam Nett sopra il rio Abaj resta per S. a 4 miglia ½. A 11¾ discendendo nel vallone, traversato il rio Chebezza. Viene di E. A 8 minuti piu abbiamo passato un grosso torrente rapido che si chiama Gugheri. A 12¼ riposato nel mezzo del vallone sopra una piccola colle dove si tiene un bazzara, il Sabato. A 1¼ Salpato. La chiesa sopra le fontane resta Sud. *A 2¼ Siamo arrivato sopra le fontane.*

This journal of the 4th November is copied from the original sketch made by Balugani as he advanced. The finished journal has a few variations, or rather corrections. For instance, in the last entry it stands*, " A 3 siamo arrivato alla chiese di San Michele sopra le fontane, e à ⅛ migl. per S. W. b S. discendendo nel vallone si travano le fontane del Nilo. Siamo dato fondo nel vallone chiamato Assua, a ½ migl. piu al S. S. E. delle suddette fontane. 6 ore = miglie.

Somma delle miglia di camino che vi sono di Gonder alle fontane del Nilo, in tutto 111 miglia incirca.

Le fontane del Nilo sono 3, una di esse aura 4 palmi di diametro in circa, ma è tutta ripiena di giunchi, e non mostra nè sua profondita, nè sua justa estensione, non essendo possibile de introdurvi nessuna sonda.

La seconda sara lontana dalla prima 5 passi, al S. poco W. ed avra 12 polici di diametro nella bocca, ma nell' interiore sara circa 4 palmi e profonda piedi 8. 3 polici. La terza sara lontana 12 passi dalla prima per S. S. W.; sua bocca e alquanto piu ampia dalla seconda, ma non tiene che 5 piedi e 8 polici di profondità. La prima essendo la piu bassa, le aque si vedono al livello della terra, ma nelle altre due, essendo il terreno alquanto rilevato l'aqua resta 8 polici in circa piu abassa che il livello di sua bocca. Tutte le tre si vedono bensi bollire, ma tanto impercettibilimente che appena con grande attentione si puo ricognoscere; e falso è cio che alcuni dicono quando dicono che sortono con strepito dalla terra rilevandosi sopra d'essa.

* The translation in page 437 begins here.

Tutto questo luogo vicino alle fontane non produce che erba e giunchi, alberi non si ritrovano almeno alla distanza di ½ miglio per ogni parte.

Latitudine delle Fontane, gradi, 10. 58. 58.

Alli 5. Novembre altura del Sole gradi. 65. 15. Alli 6. Novembre altura del Sole, 62. 56. 30.

Le sorse del Nilo sono situate nel paese d'Agow in una provincia chiamata Sakalla. Sono situate in un piccolo vallone a basso della montagna di Gheesh per E.N.E.; dalle fontanne al sommo della montagna vi sarano 2½ miglia vicino a 3. Sopra le fontane a ⅛ de miglio di distanza di esse per N. E. b N. vi è una chiesa nel sommo di una collina chiamata Cadus Michele sopra le fontane.

Sortendo il Nilo dagli sui fonti prende la direzione per E. per ¼ di miglio. Indi gira per N. E. per altro ⅓ miglio sempre nel mezzo di un Vallone senza alberi ne arbusti altro che erba e giunchi, e in tutto questo spazio non apparisce correre di nessuna maniera, ma siccome il luogo e assai piano si spande e lascia tutto il terreno intorno paludoso e stagnante. Di qui comincia a correre N. ed in breve tempo si fa rapidissimo, e continva correre per N. E. e N. sotto la montagna ove è la chiesa di Mariam Nett per lo spazio di uno miglio. Indi corre per N. W. un miglio in circa: In questo luogo all' incirca è il luogo ove si passa l'Abaj per andare a Gonder venendo dalle fontane; e la chiesa sara ad ¼ miglio di distanza per E. dal detto passagio. Doppo aver corso il suddetto miglio per N. W. si gira per W. e doppo per S.W. poi per S. S. W. poi per S. sempre ritrocedendo verso le sue fontane in tutto questo corso. Ultimo di dove commincia andare per W. fino che va per Sud sara circa 4 migla e ½. In questo luogo passa infra due montagne e comincia a rit rocedere per andara a basso per la strada di W.—N. W.—N. &c. finche va a traversare il lago, in un angolo di esso, passa vicino a Dara e rimontando per S. fa il giro di Gojam, e doppo questo viene abasso. Due miglia primo de arrivare nel luogo dove sciambia suo corso riguardando verso le fontane si vedono tre piccoli rii, uno de quali viene dell' E. altro del S. E. e altro del S.S.E.; li due primi tengono sua origine al N. E. della chiesa di San Michele Ghissh a ¼ di miglio di distanza poco meno. Il primo d'essi corre circa parallelo al Nilo ricevendo a ½ miglio di suo corso il secondo e doppo 8 miglia in circa, riceve il terzo, ed un miglio ½ in circa doppo questo si scarica nel Nilo. Il Nilo in questo luogo comincia

ad ingrossare, per che riceve altri piccoli rii che vengono del N. e del W.

Dalla sommità della Montagna di Ghissh si scoprono li paesi per li punti sequenti.

Accieffer al N. 2 giorni. [On our right as we passed the Kelti; this is its situation. *Mr Bruce's Note.*]

Bangia, N. W. b W. 1 giorno.

La montagna di Zighem, per N. b E. e S. b W. 1 giorno ½

Sangalla N. W. b N.

Ajamico, W.N.W. [Metakel.]

Burri, S. W. 1 giorno lungo, si estende N. b W.

Sakalla, N. W. 3 ore doppo Danguia.

Damut Sakalla, S.E. by S. le montagne vanno per N.E. b E. e S.W. b. W. a 4 giornate di camino.

Gaffat, per S. b W.

La montagna Amidamid, per N. E. by E. abasso dessa pel li stessi punti vi è la Meccia. Vanno per S. S. E. e N. N. W. a un gran giorno.

Gojam, per S. E. b S.

Il piccolo lago di Assua per sud.

Mecciakel per S. a 2 giorni grandi, 48 miglia.

Seghizna, la riviera viene di S. b W. e suo corso e S. E. a 3 miglia di distanza.

Gonder, per N.

Ibaba, per N.E. b N.

Le fontane sono per E.N.E. a 2 miglia ½ poco piu le due chiese restono una per l'altra N.N.E. e S.S.W.

Della Chiesa di . Michele Ghissh si scoprono li paesi per li punti seguenti, e quelli che non si scoprono si è presa la direzione.

La chiesa di Mariam Nett per N.N.E. circa 2 miglia. Le fontane per S.W. b S. La montagna di Ghissh S.W. b W. Assu per S S.E at 1½ miglio Mecciakel e Gaffatt per S.E. b S. fino S.S.W. Burri, S.W. b S. Ibaba, per N.E. Dara, per N.E. Gonder, per N. b E. Dughelber, per N.N. W. Damut prende di S. E b S. fino al E.N.E. Amidamid, per E. Bangia, per W. N. W. Guesghi, per N.W. Cuara o per lo stesso punto. Agau S. W. li paesi d'Agau, di Metakel, di Kelti, e Acheffer fanno un semicercolo. Il luogho dove abbiamo passato l'Abaj a Gutta resta per N. Affermasha e Ligiambra, per E. Litch, per E.S.E.

TRANSLATION *from the words*, " A S siamo arrivato," &c.

AT three o'clock we have arrived at the church of St Michael, above the sources; and at $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile, descending from this into the plain, are found *the fountains of the Nile*. We have halted in the valley (or plain) called Assua, half a mile to the S. S. E. of these fountains. Our journey to day has been six hours, computed at 12 miles.

The sum of the whole way, from Gondar to the fountains of the Nile, is about 111 miles.

The fountains of the Nile are three. One of them * *will be* 4 palms in diameter; but it is all full of rushes, and shews neither its depth nor true extent, it not being possible to introduce into it any sounding instrument.

The second will be 5 paces distant from the first to the south, a little west; and will be about 12 inches diameter at the mouth, but within about 4 palms, and it is 8 feet 3 inches deep.

The third will be 12 paces distant from the first, to S. S. W.; its mouth is somewhat larger than that of the second, but it is only 5 feet 8 inches deep. The first being the lowest, the water is seen at the level of the earth; but in the other two, the ground being a little raised, the water remains about 8 inches lower than the level of the mouth. All the three may be observed to spring (the word bollire signifies to boil or bubble,) but so imperceptibly that it can scarcely be discerned by great attention; and it is false what is said by some, that they spring with a noise out of the ground, rising above it.

All this place near the fountains produces only grass and rushes; trees are not found, to the distance at least of $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile on every side.

On the 5th Nov. the sun's altitude was 63. 15.
On the 6th Nov. found to be 62. 56. 30.

The latitude of the fountains is 10. 58. 58. The sources of the Nile are found in the Agow country, in a province called Sacchala. They are situated in a little valley at the foot of the mountain of Gheesh, by E. N. E. From the fountains to the top of the mountain will be $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, nearly 3. Above the fountains, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile distant from them, by N. E. b N. is a church on the top of a hill, called Kedus Michael, over the fountains. The Nile, rising out of its springs, takes a direction east for a quarter of a mile. Then it turns about to north-east for another half-mile, always in the middle of a plain (vallone), without trees or shrubs, excepting grass and rushes; and in all that space it does not appear to run; but as the earth is very flat, it spreads, and leaves the ground about, marshy, and (in) stagnant (water.) From this it begins to run north, and in a short time becomes very rapid, and continues to flow by north east and north, under the mountain, on which is the church of Mariam Nett, for the space of a mile. Thence it runs north-west about a mile. About that part is the place where they pass the Abay, to go

* This expression is literal, and might be exchanged for *is*; though computation be in some cases understood.

to Gondar, coming from the fountains, and the church will be ¼ mile to the east distant from this passage. After having run the forementioned mile north-west, it turns about west, and a little after south-west, then south south-west, then south, always retreating backwards towards its sources in all that course. From the place where it begins to go west till it runs south will be about 4½ miles. In this last place it passes between two mountains, and begins to retreat, by going down by the way of west, north-west, north, &c. until it comes to cross the lake in an angle of it; it (then) passes near to Dara, and returning south makes the circle of Gojam, after which it descends (towards the north.)

Two miles before arriving at the place where it changes its course, reverting towards its sources, are seen three small streams, one of which comes from the east, another from the south-east, and another from the south south-east: the two first of these arise to the north-east of the church of St Michael Gheesh, about somewhat less than ½ of a mile's distance. The first of these runs nearly parallel to the Nile, receiving about ½ a mile from its source the second, and then about 3 miles after the third; and about a mile and half after that discharges itself into the Nile. The Nile in that place begins to grow large; because it receives there other small streams which come from the north and west.

From the top of the mountain of Gheesh are discovered, by the following points of the compass, Atcheffor, 2 days journey distant N. Banja, N W. b W. one day distant. The mountains of Zeegam, N. b E. and S. b W 1½ day's journey off. The Shangalla country, N. W. b W. Ayanico, W. N. W. or Nerakel. Bure, S. W. one long day. It extends N. b W. Sacchala, N. W.; three hours afterwards Denguia. Damut Sachalla, S. E. b S. the mountains run N. E. b S. and S. W. b W 4 days journey distant. Gafat, S. b W. The mountain Amidamid, N. E. b E. below, that is, northward of it. By the same point is Maitsha. They extend S. S. E. and N. N. W. a long day's journey. Gojam S. E. b S. The little lake of Assoa S. Metchakel S. two long days or 48 miles. Seghizna, the river comes S. b W. and runs S. E. three miles distant. Gondar N. Ibaba N. E. b N. The fountains bear E. N. E. somewhat less than 4½ miles distant. The two churches bear to one another N. N. E. and S. S. W. *.

This account of the fountains was written in the Journal by Bulugani in the evening of the 5th November, and is an extension, with a few variations, of that made upon the spot. They sounded the fountains for the first time on that day, which he marks on the rude sketch he held in his hand thus: "Si sono soudate le fontane: la piu grande tiene tanti gunchi che non si poteva. La piu vicina a questa era profonda Piedi 8. 3. la piu lontana era Piedi 5. 8.—fra questa e la

* The bearings of these and some other places from St Michael's, Gheesh, page 436, are not translated.

prima vi saranno 18 piedi di distanza." The fountains have been sounded; the largest has so many rushes, that it could not be done; the nearest to that was 8 feet 3 inches deep; the most distant from it F. 5. 8. Between these and the first will be 18 feet distance.

On the 9th of November, Mr Bruce sounded the springs again, and retraced the course of the river. The result of this last examination was set down by himself in his own common place or pocket book, nearly in the words of the printed work; and this accounts for some difference which appears between the two narratives. It is likewise to be remarked, that, in composing his work, he always follows his own separate journals, made in the form of pocket-books, rather than the larger register kept by his assistant. This he was induced to do, chiefly on account of the one being restricted to geographical and topical matters; while the other contained more extensive views and observations, relative to the different subjects.

After this account of the sources, the Journal proceeds; Al luogho delle fontane del Nilo siamo restati cinque giorni interi, non computato il giorno di nostro arrivo, ne di nostra partenza, che e stato il Sabato 10 di Novembre.

Le 10, Sabato, Salpato di Sakalla e tenuto la medesima strada di prima, &c. &c.

" At the place of the fountains of the Nile we have remained five whole days, not computing the day of our arrival nor of our departure, which is Saturday the 10th of November.

" Saturday, 10, set out from Saccala, by the same route as we came, &c. &c."

The rest of the journal is kept in this minute manner till they came to Gondar, Monday, one o'clock, P. M. 19th November. They pitched at Dembick on the night of the 10; set out at 7 h. 20 m. in the morning of the 11th, and at 1 h. 45 m. P.M. landed at Welled abea Abbo (called in the Journal Wolabi Abbo,) in the house of Welled Amlac. They left Welled abea Abbo next morning, which is entered in these words: Lunedi, 12 Nov. Siamo sortito della casa di Weld Amlack servitore di Aito Aylo, a 8 ore, per N. &c. We have left the house of Welled Amlac, servant of Ayto Aylo, at 8 o'clock, travelling N. &c.

The sum of the days journies, from the time of their set-

ting out from Gondar till their arrival at Geesh, is computed in the journals as follows: From Gondar to Kemona, 6¼ hours; 14 miles. From Kemona to Bababaha, 6¾ hours = 12 miles. From thence to Bamba, 8½ hours, = 18 miles. From Bamba to Dughleber, 2½ hours, = 7 miles. From Dughleber to the Kelti, 10¾ hours, = 22 miles. From the Kelti to Goutta, 7 hours, = 14 miles. From Goutta to the little village of Adowa, 6½ hours, about 12 miles. From Adowa to Assoa, or the fountains, 6 hours, = 12 miles. In all 111 miles. The sum of the stages on return, is computed at 93 miles, the difference being 8. The reason of the shortness of some of these stages the reader must have observed in the narrative.

The journal from Masuah to Gondar is similar to that which has been described. The computed lengths of the stages were, however, thought by Mr Bruce to be over-rated; and after entering a note to that effect in the end of it, he appears to have trusted chiefly to his celestial observations in the construction of the map. The following table is found in the folio volume containing his weather Journal.

Measures of the elevation above the level of the sea in different parts of Abyssinia. The level taken at Masuah.

At Masuah, by the mean of 41 observations, barometer 25. 6. 2.

	Barom.	Difference.	Diff. of elevation in Eng. miles.	Feet.
Masuah, - -	25 6 2	4 5 0	0	4664
Dixas, - -	21 1 2			
Addua, by a mean, -	22 3 1	3 3 1	0	3441
Dippebahar, foot of Lamalmon, - -	21 3 9	4 2 3	0	4427
On Lamalmon, -	19 8 8	5 9 4	1	827

As the discovery of the sources of the Nile has been attributed both to Peter Paez, the celebrated Jesuit, who converted Susneus the Abyssinian king, and his court, to the Romish faith; and to Jerome Lobo, who was afterwards employed in the mission to that country, it is but just to lay

their accounts before the reader, along with an English translation, that he may judge of the controversy, according to the evidence that appears in those narratives. Neither of them can be given in the original Portuguese, as the writings of Paez and Lobo have never been published. The account of the fountains by Paez was translated into Latin from a MS. copy of his travels, circulated among the Jesuits in Europe, by Athanasius Kircher, an enthusiast in oriental antiquities and languages; on which he wrote voluminously, with much imagination and little judgment. The papers of Lobo were communicated to M. Le Grande, a French *Prieur*, by the Count d'Ericeira, at Lisbon; from which, and other materials, he wrote his "Relation Historique d'Abyssinie du R. P. Jerome Lobo de la compagnie de Jesus," along with several bigotted dissertations on the state of religion, &c. in Habbesh. His work, except the *Relation* of Lobo, which is a strange mixture of truth, falsehood, ignorance and vanity, is, however, not without merit*. He was ignorant of the Abyssinian languages; and seems to have despised the labours of Ludolf, the only Ethiopic scholar in the age in which he lived. The most useful part of the relation of Lobo is his journey through the countries on the S. E. of Habbesh, then occupied by the Mahometans and Galla.

* This severity with respect to Lobo is solely directed against that fabulous part of his narrative which must strike every intelligent reader as unworthy of being approved, much less of being extolled as admirable and instructive by so great a man as Dr Johnson. Prejudice and envy often sullied his deliberate as well as occasional sentiments. As to the labours of the Jesuits in Abyssinia and throughout the world, these have been on the whole much more useful than injurious to mankind. If they were rash and injudicious in their efforts to establish their opinions, they dearly paid for those defects. They were a learned, enterprising, but somewhat dangerous community, because their great abilities had not in view the best way of promoting an excellent cause.—E.

No. II.

Description of the Fountains of the Nile, by Father Pedro Paez, as translated from the Portuguese Original, by Athanasius Kircher *.

POSTQUAM tractavimus de fertilitate terrarum sub dominio Presbyteris Joannis, operæ pretium me facturum existimavi, si hoc loco nonnihil de præcipuis fluminibus et lacubus terrarum ejus imperio subjectarum referam. Inter quæ primo loco se offert maximus ille et toto orbe celeberrimus fluvius Nilus, qui non apud antiquos solum et modernos doctores authoresque gravissimos in admiratione fuit, sed et cujus frequentem mentionem facit Sacra Scriptura. Gen. 2. vocatur Gehon unus e quatuor paradisum irrigantibus. Hic hodierno die vocatur ab Æthiopibus Abaoi: originem suam tenet in regno Goyam in uno territorio, quod vocatur Sahala, cujus incolæ vocantur Agous, suntque Christiani, etsi successu temporum sylvescente ecclesia variis superstitionibus imbuti, et a gentibus et paganis vicinis corrupti, parum differant. Anno 1618, 21 die mensis Aprilis, cum in hoc regno una cum imperatore ejusque exercitu degerem, hunc locum ascendi, omnia diligenter lustravi, invenique primo duos ibi fontes rotundos, utrumque quatuor quasi palmis latum in diametro, summaque animi mei voluptate vidi id quod nullis votis consequi potuerunt Cyrus Rex Persarum, et Cambyses, Alexander Magnus, et famosus ille Julius Cæsar. Aqua fontis clarissima est et levissima, gustuque gratissima; sciendum tamen, nullum hosce duos oculos fontis in suprema montis planitie exitum habere, sed in radice montis; profunditatem quoque fontium tentavimus, et in primum quidem lanceam immisimus, quæ intrando ad 11 palmos tangere videbatur

* Œdipus Ægyptiacus, Vol. I. Romæ, 1652, pag. 57—59. The Abyssinian date answering to April 1618, is Miazia, A. M. 7110.

quasdam veluti radices vicinarum arborum sibi invicem implexas.

Secundus fons vergit a primo in orientem ad jactum lapidis, hujus profunditatem explorantes, immissa lancea 12 palmorum, denuo rem tentavimus, sed nec sic fundum tenere potuimus, dicuntque incolæ, totum montem plenum aquis, cujus hoc signum dabant, quod tota circa fontem planities tremula erat et bulliens, manifestum latentis aquæ vestigium, eandemque ob causam non redundat aqua ad fontem, sed ad radices impetu maximo sese egerit: affirmabantque incolæ, ut et ipse imperator, qui præsens erat una cum exercitu suo, eo anno terram parum tremuisse ob magnum anni siccitatem, aliis vero annis ita tremere et bullire, ut vix sine periculo adire liceat. Circuitus loci instar lacus cujusdam rotundi, cujus latitudo fundæ jactum constituere possit. Infra apicem hujus montis, populus degit ad montem, leuca circiter una a fonte dissitum versus orientem, vocaturque Guix, et videtur hinc fons bombarda attingi posse. Est hoc loco vicus gentilium qui sacrificant multus vaccas et venientes ad fontem, certo die anni una cum sacrificulo, quem pro sacerdote tenebant, qui ibi sacrificabat unam vaccam juxta fontem caputque vaccæ abscissum projiciebat in fontis abyssum*, e lago hia prima a quale huo, onde facean solenne sacrificio mutando muitas vaccas, que os gentios d'hc tracean, e dopois se cubria todo com o sevo dellas, e asentava en un cadeira de ferro, que tinha posta nomo de muita lenha seca, e mandava sem se quermar nem ainda derretersi o sevo, e algumas veces etravan depois da fogo acesso, e se asentava a questa gente de maneira, che con estas feteizerias engennava a quella gente de maneira que o tinham por grande Santo, che davan questo sato queria.

Porro campus fontis Nili ab omni parte difficilis ascensu est, præterquam ex parte boreali, ubi facile conscenditur. Infra montem circiter una leuca in profundissima quadam valle, e terræ visceribus, alius fluvius emergit, qui se tamen cum Nilo paulo post conjungit, credunt eandem cum Nilo scatumginem obtinere; sed infra terram per occultos canales deductum hoc loco primum erumpere. Rivus vero fontis,

* Eight lines of the original which Kircher has not translated.

qui infra montem erumpit, in orientem spatio jactus bombardæ vergit; deinde subito declinando Boream petit, et post quartam circiter leucæ partem novus sese offert rivus e saxis et scopulis ebulliens, cui paulo post se jungunt duo alii rivi, ex orientis plaga erumpentes, et sic deinde aliis et aliis identidem collectis rivis notabiliter crescit Nilus. Post spatium vero diurnum itineris magno fluvio, qui dicitur Iama conjungitur, qui deinde flectit se versus occidentem usque ad 25 leucas, vel 35 leucas a prima sua scaturigine, postea mutato cursu orientem repetit, insinuando se in unum lacum ingentem (est hic situs in provincia qui dicitur Bed, regnoque partim Goyam subjacet, partim regno Dambiæ) quem ita pertransit, ut aquæ Nili notabilem differentiam ab aquis lacus ostendant; totusque fluvius aquis palustribus impermistis suum cursum fluxumque teneat; qui mox ubi exit, variis gyris declinando in meridiem, terram irrigat nomine Alata quinque leucis ab epistomio lacus distantem, ubi per rupes 14 brachiorum altas præcipitatus paulo post intra duos rupes ingentes ita absorbetur, ut vix oculis attingi potuerit, sunt cacumina dictarum rupium ita vicina, ut imperator aliquoties, strato per illa ponte, cum toto suo exercitu transierit; quibus omnibus et ego præsens fui; postquam igitur a parte orientali regnum Begamidri, Goyam cæteraque intermedia regna Ambara, Olaca, Xaoa, Damo, longe lateque irrigavit; mox flexu suo regnum Goyam repetit, irrigatisque territorii Bizan et Gumancanca ita sensim regno Goyam repetit, ut non nisi unius diei itinere a fonte suo distare comperiatur. Hinc fluxum retorquendo versus Fazolo et Ombarca, regnum gentilium, quod anno 1613 ingenti exercitu subegerat Eraz Selachristos, frater imperatoris, regnumque utpote incognitum, et ob vastitatem vocavit Ayzolam, id est novum mundum. Hinc ex Oriente in Boream declinans per innumeras alias regiones, vastissimaque præcipitia dilapsus in Ægyptum, et hinc in mare Mediterraneum sese exonerat.

TRANSLATION.

AFTER having treated of the fertility of the countries under the government of Prester John, I thought it would be worth while if I should give in this place some account of the principal rivers and lakes in the countries subject to his command. Among which the great and universally celebrated river Nile presents itself in the first place, which was

not a subject of admiration only among ancient and modern sages and the most respectable authors, but of which even the Sacred Scripture makes frequent mention. In Genesis, chap. ii. it is called Gehon, one of the four rivers watering Paradise. This is called to-day, by the Ethiopians, Abaoi (Abawi, or Abay); it rises in the kingdom of Goyam (Gojam), in a district called Sahala (Sacala), whose inhabitants are called Agous (Agows), and are Christians, although, in the course of ages the church becoming licentious, having imbibed various superstitions, and being corrupted by the neighbouring Gentiles and Pagans, they differ little from them. But the source of the Nile is situated in the western part of the kingdom of Goyam, in the upper (or highest) part of a valley, which resembles a large plain, surrounded on every side with ridges of hills. A. D. 1618, April 21st, when I was living in this kingdom along with the emperor and his army, I *ascended* this place, viewed every thing diligently, and found at first two round fountains there, both about four palms in diameter, and with the greatest pleasure of mind saw what Cyrus, king of the Persians, Cambyses, Alexander the Great, and the famous Julius Cæsar, could obtain by no wishes. The water of the source is very clear and light, and agreeable to the taste; yet it must be known that these two fountains of the source have no outlet in the uppermost part of the plain of the mountain, but at the foot of the mountain *. We tried also the depth of the fountains, and put a lance into the first, which, entering 11 palms, seemed to touch, as it were, some roots of the neighbouring trees entangled with one another.

The second fountain bears from the first east about a stone's cast; trying the depth of this, by putting in a lance of 12 palms, we found no bottom, but having tied two lances together, in length 20 palms, we tried the thing again; but not even then could we find bottom, and the inhabitants say that the whole mountain is full of water, of which they gave this sign, that all the plain about the fountain shook and bubbled, a plain mark of concealed water, and that, for the same reason, the water did not overflow at the sources, but threw itself out with very great force at the foot of them; and the inhabitants affirmed, as well as the emperor himself, who was present along with his army, that the ground had trembled little that year, on account of the great dryness of the season, but in other years it shook and bubbled so, that it could scarcely be approached without danger. The circumference of the place is like a round lake, the breadth of which may be a sling's cast. Below the peak of this mountain lives a people on the side of it, distant about a league from the source, towards the west, which is called Guix (Gheesh), and the fountain from that seems capable of being reached with a gunshot. There is in this place a village of heathens, who sacrifice many cows. Coming to the source on a certain day of the year, along with a religious quack, whom they reckoned a priest, he sacrificed there a cow at the fountains, and threw the head, cut off, into the depth of one of them, after which he killed many cows which the heathens brought to him. Then anointing himself with their fat he seated himself in a

* This is unintelligible; Kircher having misunderstood, or obtained an incorrect copy of the original.

chair of iron, on a pile of dry wood to which they set fire, and continued on it without being burnt or the fat melting; and with these sorceries he so bewitched this people that they took him for a great Saint, and gave him large presents *.

Further, the plain of the fountains of the Nile is difficult of ascent, on every side but on the north, where it is easily ascended. Below the mountain about a league, in a very deep valley, rises another river from the bowels of the earth, which however joins itself a little after to the Nile; they believe it has the same source with the Nile, but that, conducted under ground by secret channels, it rises first here. But the rivulet from the source, which breaks out below the mountain, runs a gun-shot to the east, then, winding suddenly, flows to the north, then, about the fourth part of a league afterwards, a new river presents itself, dashing from the stones and rock, to which two other rivers a little after join themselves, breaking from the east quarter; and so on, by receiving constantly one stream after another, the Nile increases remarkably. After a day's journey, it meets with a large river, that is called Jama (Jemma); then turning towards the west for 25 leagues, or 35 leagues from its sources, it next reflects its course to the east, winding into a large lake (situated in the province called Bed, and partly adjacent to the kingdom of Goyam, partly to that of Dambia,) which it passes through in such a manner, as that the waters of the Nile shew a remarkable difference from the waters of the lake; and the whole stream, unmixed with the lake waters, holds on its course. Soon after its egress, turning by various curves towards the south, it waters a district called Alata, about five leagues distant from the outlet of the lake, in which it falls over the rocks fourteen cubits (brachia, perhaps yards) high, with immense noise, and watery vapour, which, at a distance, appeared to me like a mist. A little after, tumbling in between two huge rocks, it is so absorbed, that it can scarcely be observed. The tops of the said rocks are so near one another, that the emperor, having laid a bridge over them, several times passed with his whole army; at all which I was present. Afterwards from the eastern side it waters, all about, the province of Begamidri (Begemder, or Begamidre), Goyam, and the other intermediate kingdoms of Amhara, Olaca, (Walaka) Xaoa (Shoa), and Damot. Then, with its stream, it repairs back to the kingdom of Goyam, and having watered the territories Bizan (Bizamo) and Gumancanca (Gumar and Ganz), it approaches Gojam so greatly, that it is known to be only a day's journey from its sources. Thence it reflects its course towards Fazolo (Fazuclo) and Ombarea (Wumbarea), a nation of Pagans, which Ras Selachristos, the emperor's brother, subdued with a great army in the year 1613, and called the country, as being unknown and waste, Ayzolam (Hadis-alem), the new world. Hence the river turning north, through innumerable other regions, and most stupendous precipices, enters Egypt, and then the Mediterranean.

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* This is the purport rather than the translation of the Portuguese, which Kircher mixes with his Latin, in so confused a state, as to be unintelligible both to himself and his readers.

No. III.

Description of the Sources of the Nile, by Father Jerome Lobo, as translated into French from the Portuguese original MS. by M. Le Grand.*

Le Nil que ceux du pais nomment Abavi, c'est-à-dire, le Pere des eaux, prend sa source dans la province de Sacahala Royaume de Goiama, un des plus beaux et de meilleurs que possede l'Empereur des Abyssins. Cette province est occupée par une certaine nation des Agaus que se dit Chretienne, et qui ne l'est pas veritablement que de nom; ces Agaus ayant pris et retenu toutes les coutumes et céremonies des Agaus idolâtres avec qui ils s'allient tous les jours, par les mariages qu'ils contractent les uns avec les autres. Ces deux peuples sont nombreux, feroces et indomptables; le pais est plein de montagnes couvertes de forêts épaisses et impenetrables. Lorsque les Agaus sont pressés et qu'ils ne peuvent pas tenir la campagne, ils se retirent dans des cavernes que la nature a creusées dans ces montagnes. Il y a de ces trous capables de contenir deux ou trois familles nombreuses, avec plus de trois ou quatre cens vaches. Il est très-difficile de découvrir ces caches, et presque impossible d'en chasser les Agaus, quand on les a découverts. Cette nation peuple extrémement, parce qu'il est permis à chaque homme de prendre autant de femmes qu'il a centaines de vaches, et il n'est pas meme necessaire que le nombre soit absolument complet. A l'Est donc du Royaume de Goyama, et sur le penchant d'une montagne dont la descente ne paroit qu'une belle et agreable compagne, est cette source du Nil si cachée

* Relation Histor. d'Abyssinie, p. 105—109.

jusque à nos jours, et qu'on a cherchée pendant tant de tems si inutilement. Cette source où plutôt ces deux sources, sont deux trous de quatre palmes de diametre, chacun à un jet de pierre l'un de l'autre. Un de ces trous n'a qu'onze palmes de profondeur, du moins nous ne pûmes faire descendre notre sonde plus bas; peutêtre aussi fût elle arretée par le grande nombre de racines que nous rencontrâmes y aïant beaucoup d'arbres tout autour. Cette source est un peu plus petite que l'autre qui est plus bas. Nous sondâmes aussi celle-ci, et quoique notre sonde fût de vingt palmes, nous ne pûmes trouver le fond; les gens du païs nous assurerent que personne ne l'a encore trouvé. On croit que ces deux sources ne sont que les ouvertures d'un grand lac caché sous terre, parce que tout autour le fond est toujours humide, et si peu ferme qu'il en sort des bouillons d'eau des que l'on y marche. On s'en apperçoit encore mieux lorsque qu'il a beaucoup plû; car le terre baisse et s'affaisse extrêmement; je pense meme qu'elle ne se soutient que par les grande nombre de racines qui s'entrelassent les unes dans les autres, et qui l'empêche d'enfoncer tout-a-fait: le terrain est ainsi tout autour de ces fontaines. A la portée d'une fronde et à micoste, est un bourg ou village par où l'on passe pour aller au haut de la montagne de Guix; c'est ainsi qu'elle s'appelle. Lorsque l'on est sur la cime, on decouvre une grande etendue de païs, qui parôit comme une profonde vallée, et cependant le penchant de la montagne est si doux qu'à peine s'apperçoit on que l'on monte ou que l'on descend.

Du haut de cette montagne s'éleve une espéce de tertre que les Agaus idolâtres ont en une grande veneration. Leur Prêtre les assemble là tous les ans, et y sacrifice une vache dont on jette la tête dans une de sources du Nil. Cette cérémonie faite, chacun immole une ou plusieurs vaches selon ses biens et sa devotion; on en mange la chair comme une chose sacrée. Il s'est deja fait des os de ces vaches, deux montagnes assez hautes qui attirent tous les oiseaux du païs, ce que prouve assez que ces peuples ont toujours adoré le Nil, et l'adorent encore comme un Divinité. Les sacrifices acheves, le Prêtre s'oint tout le corps du suif et de la graisse de ces vaches, et va s'asseoir dans une chaise de paille, sur le haut et au milieu du bûcher qu'on a preparé. On y met le feu et le bûcher se consume, sans que ce prêtre en soit offensé,

ni que le suif fonde ou degoûte en aucune maniere. Tant que le feu dure, le Prêtre prêche les assistants, et les confirme dans l'aveuglement ou ils sont.' Le bûcher consumé et le discours fini, il n'y a personne qui ne fasse grandes aumones à ce prêtre, ce que est le fin et le fait de cette momerie. Le Gemma dont nous parlerons bientôt roule ses eaux le long d'une longe et profonde vallée et se va perdre dans le Nil. Le Nil en sortant de sa source se tient caché, et comme enseveli sous des herbes, et coule vers l'Est, environ une bonne portée de mousquet, puis se tourne au Nord par l'espace d'un quart de lieue, ensuite il paroit pour la premiere fois entre des pierres. Cette vûë donne de la joye, et cause en même tems de l'etonnement à ceux qui sçavent combien les anciens ont ecrit des fables, combien ils ont formé de vains raisonnements sur les sources de cette riviere, sur la nature de ses eaux, sur ses cataractes, sur ses inundations, toutes choses que presentement nous connoisons, que nous touchons pour ainsi dire du doigt et que nous voyons à l'oeil.

Plusieurs interpretes de l'Ecriture Sainte ont pretendu que le Gehon dont il est parle dans la Genese n'est autre que le Nil qui enferme toute l'Ethiopie; mais comme le Gehon a sa source dans le Paradis terrestre, et que nous sçavons certainement que le Nil a la sienne dans le païs des Agaus, il faut voir si deux sources si eloignées peuvent produire une même riviere, et de quelle maniere cette riviere, dont la source est si basse, peut venir reparoître dans le lieu peut-être le plus elevé qui soit au monde. Car si l'on considere que l'Arabie et la Palestine sont presque au niveau de l'Egypte; que l'Egypte est aussi basse à l'égard de la province de Dambie, que la plus profonde vallée l'est à l'egard de la plus haute montagne, et que la province de Sacala est encore plus elevée que celle de Dambie; qu'il faut que les eaux du Nil, ou passent sous la Mer rouge, ou fassent un trés-grand tour; on aura bien de la peine à comprendre que la terre ait un vertu attractive assez fort pour élever tant d'eaux à travers tant de sables, et des lieux si bas et si profonds jusqu'au païs le plus élevé de toute l'Ethiopie.

Mais sans nous embarasser dans toutes ces difficultes, continuons nous à decrire le cours du Nil. Il roule si peu d'eau en sortant de sa source, qu'il semble qu'il devroit être à sec dans les grands chaleurs de l'Eté. Grossie bientôt par

le Gemma, le Keltu, le Bransu, et plusieurs autres moindres rouisseaux, il s'etend tellement dans la plaine de Baad, qui n'est guere qu' à trois journées de sa source qu'un fusil peut à peine porter una balle d'un bord à l'autre. Là cette riviere prend son cours vers le Nord, en tournant neanmoins un peu vers l'Est par l'espace de neuf à dix lieuës, puis entre dans le fameux Lac de Dambie, que l'on appelle Bahar-Sena, ressemblance de la mer, ou Bahar-Dambia mer de Dambie. Il le traverse seulement par une extremité mais avec tant de rapidité, qu'on distingue les eaux du Nil avec celles du Lac, pendant les six lieuës que l'on compte de l'entrée à la sortie, le Nil est alors tres-gros. A cinq lieuës de-là, en traversant la terre d'Alata, il tombe du haut d'un rocher en bas, et fait la plus belle et la plus agréable nappe d'eau que l'on puisse voir: c'est sa premiere cataracte. J'ai passé dessous sans me mouiller, et m'y reposant pour jouïr du frais que donne cette eau, j'y admirois les belles et vives couleurs de mille arcs-en-ciel que forment les rayons du Soleil. Comme cette riviere tombe de fort haut elle fait un si grand bruit qu'on l'entend de très loin; mais je ne me suis point apperçu que les peuples des environs soient sourds. J'ai parle à plusieurs; ils m'entendoient comme je les entendois; et l'on voit même bien plutôt, et de bien plus loin, l'écume et la fumée que fait cette eau en tombant, que l'on n'entend le bruit. Après cette cataracte, le Nil se reserre tellement entre des rochers, qu'il semble qu'ils ne se soyent ouverts que pour lui donner passage. Ils sont si proches, que de mon tems on y fit un pont avec des poutres, sur lequel toute l'armée Imperiale passa. Il s'est trouvé même des hommes assez hardis, assez souple, assez fort pour sauter d'un rocher sur l'autre. Depuis, l'Empereur Sultan Segued a fait faire un pont d'une seule arche, par des massons qu'il avoit envoyé chercher aux Indes, afin que ces peuples puissent avoir plus de commerce, et passer plus aisement d'une province dans l'autre. Ce pont est le premier que les Abissins ont vû sur le Nil. Cette riviere tourne là, et traverse plusieurs royaumes. Elle laisse à l'est celui de Begemder, qu'on appelle ainsi, à cause du grand nombre de moutons qu'on y nourrit; Meder veut dire terre, et Beg, mouton. Elle baigne ensuite les royaumes ou provinces d'Ambara d'Oloca, de Chaoa, de Damot, qui sont sur la rive gauche; sur la droite est le royaume de Goiama, dont

il fait une presqu'isle, puis il passe entre Bezamo, qui fait une partie du royaume de Damot, et Gamarcansa, qui est du royaume de Goiam; mais en cet endroit il s'approche si près de sa source, que de là il n'en est eloigné que d'une petite journée, quoi qu'a suivre son cours et à faire le tour de Goiam, comme il fait, il y en a vingt neuf. Jusques là ce fleuve n'est point sorti du royaume des Abyssins; il y roule encore ses eaux pendant quelques jours; puis il entre dan les terres de Fazulo et d'Ombarca, qui confinent de ce côte là avec l'Abyssinie.

On n'a aucune connoissance de ces vastes regions. Les peuples qui les habitent sont tres differents des Abissins, Leurs cheveux sont trés courts, et crêpés comme ceux de tous les autres Noirs. L'an 1615 Rassela Christos, lieutenant-general des troupes de Sultan Segued, voulut entrer dans ces royaumes, et y porter la guerre; mais etonné de leur vaste entendue, et du peu de connoissance qu'il en pût prendre, il s'en revint sans avoir osé rien entreprendre, et il nomma ces païs Adisalem, qui veut dire, Nouveau Monde.

TRANSLATION.

The Nile, which those of the country call Abavi, that is to say, the Father of Waters, has its source in the province of Sacahala, in the kingdom of Goiama, one of the finest and best that the Abyssinian emperor possesses. That province is inhabited by a nation of Agaus, who call themselves Christians, but who, in reality, are only so by name, these Agaus having gotten and retained all the customs and ceremonies of the idolatrous Agaus, with whom they ally themselves, every day, by marriages which they contract with one another. These two nations are numerous, fierce, and invincible; the country is full of mountains, covered with thick and impenetrable forests. When the Agaus are pressed, and cannot keep the plains, they retire into caverns, which nature has hollowed out in these mountains. There are some of these holes capable of containing two or three numerous families, with more than three or four hundred cattle. It is very difficult to discover these hiding places, and almost impossible to drive the Agaus out of them when they are found. That nation multiplies exceedingly; because every man is allowed to take as many wives as he has hundreds of cattle, and it is not even necessary that the numbers be altogether complete. To the east, then, of the kingdom of Goyama, and on the declivity of a hill, the

descent of which appears only like a fine agreeable plain, is the source of the Nile, concealed even till our days, and which has been sought, for so long time so unsuccessfully. That source, or rather those two sources, are two holes, four palms in diameter, each about a stone's cast from one another. One of these is only eleven palms deep, at least we could not make our sounding instrument descend further; perhaps, also, it was stopped by the great number of roots that we met with, there being many trees all around. That fountain is a little smaller than the other, which is lower down. We sounded also that, and, although our sounding instrument was 20 palms long, we could not find any bottom: The people of the country assured us, that nobody had found it as yet. It is believed that these two sources are only openings of a great lake concealed under ground; because, that all around them the soil is ever wet, and so unstedfast, that spouts of water come out of it when it is walked upon. This is more perceptible when it has rained much, for the earth bends and sinks down exceedingly; I even think it is supported only by the great number of roots that are interwoven with one another, and which prevent it from sinking entirely. The ground is such all about these fountains. A sling's cast thence, and half way up the mountain, is a town, or village, through which they pass in going up to the top of the hill of Guix *, for so it is called. From the top of it is discovered a great extent of country, that appears like a deep valley; yet the descent of the hill is so gentle, that it can scarcely be perceived whether one is going up or coming down.

On the top of that mountain rises a sort of hillock, which the idolatrous Agaus hold in great veneration. Their priest assembles them yearly, and sacrifices there a cow, the head of which they throw into one of the sources of the Nile. After that ceremony, every one sacrifices one or more cows, according to his wealth and devotion; and they eat the flesh as a sacred thing. There are already raised two considerable hillocks of the bones of these cows, that attract all the birds of the country; which proves sufficiently, that these people have always adored the Nile, and adore it still as a divinity. When the sacrifices are over, the priest anoints his whole body with the fat and grease of these cows, and sits down on a seat of straw on the top, and in the middle, of a wooden pile which has been prepared. They set fire to it, and the pile is consumed without the priest's being annoyed by it, or the fat melting or becoming any way disagreeable to him. As long as the fire lasts, the priest preaches to the by-standers, and confirms them in their present delusion. The pile being consumed, and the sermon ended, there is nobody who does not give large alms to the priest; which is the main object of this quackery. The Gemma, of which we will speak by and by, rolls its waters through a long and deep valley, and is lost in the Nile. The Nile, coming from its source, keeping itself concealed, and, as it were, buried under the grass, runs towards the east about a good musket-shot, then turns north a quarter of a league, and then appears for the first time, among

* X, in Portuguese, is pronounced Sh; so Guix is pronounced Guish, or Geesh; Xaoa, Shoa, &c. The Portuguese has not the English and Abyssinian *w*; consequently Walaka is written Olaca; Wedge, Ogge; Wumbarea, Ombarea; and so forth in similar examples.

stones. That sight excites joy, and, at the same time, astonishment in those who know how many fables the ancients have written about it, how many vain reasonings they have formed respecting the sources of this river, the nature of its waters, its cataracts and inundations, all things which at present we know perfectly, and, in a manner, touch and see.

Several interpreters of Scripture have pretended, that the Gehon, spoken of in Genesis, is no other than the Nile that encompasses all Ethiopia; but as the Gehon had its source in the terrestrial Paradise, and we know for certain, that the source of the Nile is in the country of the Agows, it must be considered, whether two sources, so distant from one another, can produce the same river, and in what manner that river, whose source is so low, can reappear again in, perhaps, the most elevated spot in the world. For, if we consider that Arabia and Palestine are almost level with Egypt; that Egypt is as low, with regard to the province of Dembea, as the deepest valley is to the highest mountain, and that the province of Sacala is still more elevated than that of Dembea; that the waters of the Nile must either pass under the Red Sea, or make a very great turn about—it will be very difficult to comprehend how the earth has an attractive power sufficient to elevate so much water through so many sands, and places so low and deep, up to the highest country in all Ethiopia.

But, without involving ourselves in all these difficulties, let us continue our description of the course of the Nile. It rolls so little water at coming from its source, that it should seem it must be dry in the great heats of summer. Soon enlarged by the Gemma, Keltu, and Bramu, and several smaller torrents, it descends so large into the plain of Baad, that it is only about three days journey from its head, till a gun can scarcely carry a ball from bank to bank of it. There the river takes a northward course, turning, however, a little to the east, for the space of between nine or ten leagues; then enters into the famous lake of Dembea, that they call Bahar-Sana, *resemblance of the sea* *; or Bahar Dambea, *the sea of Dembea*. It crosses it only at the extremity, but with so much rapidity, that the waters of the Nile are distinguished from those of the lake during the six leagues that are reckoned from its influx to its outlet. The Nile is then very large. Five leagues thence, in crossing the territory of Alata, it falls over a rock, and makes the finest and most pleasant sheet of water in the world: It is its first cataract. I have passed under it without wetting myself: and resting myself there to enjoy the freshness which the water gives, I admired the fine lively colours of the rainbows formed in it by the beams of the sun. As this river falls from a great height, it makes a very loud noise, that is heard at a great distance; but I could not perceive that the people in the neighbourhood were deaf. I spoke to several, who heard me as I heard them: and the foam and vapour the water raises in falling, is seen even at a much greater distance than the sound is heard. After that cataract, the Nile

* This is a mistake; it signifies the lake of Tzana, one of its principal islands. The etymology of Begemder is probably not more accurate.—Neither is the cataract of Alata the first, as the patriarch Alphonso Mendez and Mr Bruce both affirm the contrary.—E.

confines itself so straitly between rocks, that they seem divided merely to let it pass. They are so near, that in my time a bridge was made over them of wood, along which passed the whole Imperial army. There have been even found men, bold, agile, and strong enough to leap from one rock to the other. Since, the Emperor Sultan Seghued has made a bridge over it of a single arch, by masons he had brought from India, in order that these people may have more intercourse, and pass more easily from one province into another. This bridge is the first that the Abyssinians have seen on the Nile. That river turns there, and crosses over many kingdoms. It leaves on the east that of Begemder, so called because of the great number of sheep which it breeds; meder signifying earth, and beg, a sheep. It then washes the kingdoms of Amhara, Olaca (Walaka), Chao (Shoa), and Damot, that are upon the left bank. On the right is the kingdom of Goiama, of which it makes almost a peninsula; then it passes between Bezamo, which is part of the kingdom of Damot *, and Gamarcansa, which is in the kingdom of Goiam; but in that place it approaches so near its source, that it is only a short day's journey from it, though to follow its windings round Goiam be a journey of 29 days. Hitherto this river has not left the Abyssinian dominions; it runs in them still for some days; then enters the countries of Fazulo (Fasuclo) and Ombarca (Wumbarca), that border on that side with Abyssinia.

There is nothing known of these vast regions. The inhabitants are very different from the Abyssinians. Their hair is very short and curled, like that of all the other negroes. In the year 1615, Rassela Christos, lieutenant-general of the troops of Sultan Seghued, wished to carry war into these kingdoms; but, astonished at their vast extent, and the little information of them he could obtain, he returned without attempting any thing, and called these countries Adisalem, that is, the *New World*.

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* Damot, or Damot abay, the *greater* Damot, is beyond the Nile, and Bizamo is part of it. Gamarcansa is probably a corruption of Gumar and Ganz, not in Gojam, but likewise on the left side.—E.

No. IV.

Observations on the Accounts of the Nile by Paez and Lobo.

On the certainty of these fountains having been seen by Paez, there can be little difference of opinion. His account seems to be miserably translated by Kircher, who makes him in several places speak inconsistently, and who in one passage is totally unable to guess at his meaning. This he sets down in the middle of his Latin translation, in the original Portuguese, as a kind of exercise for the understanding of his readers. A rude map of the country of the Agows is found in the compilation of Balthazar Tellez, and several more were constructed from the materials of the Jesuits. The map of Abyssinia in Le Grande's work is by no means contemptible, much less that of Ludolph, 1683, in his Abyssinian history. The names of many places, which the Jesuits had mangled exceedingly, are restored by him to the proper orthography. In Le Grande's Relation d'Abyssinie there is an excellent map of the coast of Eastern Africa, between Cape Guardafui and that of Good Hope, in which the southern part of Abyssinia, including the peninsula of Gojam and the Agows, is delineated by the celebrated D'Anville. There is, however, an error in it of more than a degree of latitude, for he places Guix in N. L. 12°, or a few minutes more to the north, which is certainly about N. L. 10°, 59.

Paez resided for a long time in Abyssinia, which he entered before the accession of Susneus to the throne. The year in which he dates his account is 1618, which is undoubtedly inaccurate, as we know from the Abyssinian annals all the events of that reign. Instead of April, 1618, it should probably be 1615, as Susneus having gained the important

victory over Jacob, March 10, 1607, the rainy season intervened, after which the second year of his reign was spent in campaigns in Tigre, and against the Liban Galla in Gojam. The third year of his reign was occupied in wars against Melchisedec. The fourth, 1611-12, was spent in Gojam against the Galla; and the Agow war likewise commenced this year, in attacks upon those of Zalabassa, Tchera*, and Quaquera. In the fifth, 1612-13, the emperor began to waste the Agow country of Atcheffer and Laga, when he returned and passed the rainy season at Gorgora. The sixth, 1613-14, was spent against the Boren Galla, in Gojam, who had made inroads as far as Dara and Shabla, on the lake of Dembea; against the Warinsha or Toluma Galla, in Walaka; and against the Agows, as the king encamped all the rainy season at Atcheffer, in the Agow country. Next year, 1714-15, was totally employed in war with the Agow tribes, the Zalabassa, Tchera, Succot, and Abolla, which include the Agows of Sacala. Susneus encamped with his whole army during the rainy seasons of that and the following year at Atcheffer, to the west of Sacala, nor was he afterwards on any expedition into that part of the country, till some time after the death of Paez. Indeed, a remark in the Abyssinian MS. Chronicle fixes the presence of Paez in the camp at Atcheffer to the year 1614-15, the 7th of Susneus, as accurately as a positive date. After describing the campaign against the Agows, and mentioning that the winter residence was taken up at Atcheffer, it adds, "In that year began the controversy of the two natures (in Christ)."

Paez was therefore at Sacala with the army in April, 1615, about the beginning of the rainy season, before it marched to Atcheffer; nor is it probable that he ever revisited the sources of the Abay. The Agows in that age possessed the formidable character which Lobo has described, very different indeed from that which they displayed in the year 1770. It may well be affirmed, that in those days no European, far less a priest, unsupported by an army, would have dared to enter Sacala, or if he had, would ever have returned.

The marshy plain of the fountains has a different aspect in

* Tchera is a town in Agow-midre; there is another of the same name in Lasta, the country of the Tcheretsh Agows.

the rainy from what it presents in the dry season. The same may be said of the Nile and its cataracts, either before it enters, or after it leaves, the lake of Dembea.

The Jesuits must have often seen the Nile, and crossed it on both sides of the lake, by the routes of Dara or Dingleber, as they went to their seven settlements in Gojam, or Damot *. These were chiefly in the east, or in the middle of the peninsula formed by the Nile; and they had neither occasion nor protection to go often so far west as Sacala. Accordingly, Paez appears to be the only person of the Jesuits who can dispute the honour of having seen and described these coy fountains with Mr Bruce. They all, however, knew where the sources of the river lay, had inquired about them at the natives, and were able to write a tolerable account of the place from the circulating narrative of Paez, and their own information.

Jerome Lobo arrived at Fremona, in Tigre, from India, June 21, 1624, two years after the death of Paez. He remained in Tigre, at a distance from the court and the Nile, till after the rebellion and death of Tecla Georgis, Kasmati of Tigre, succeeded by Keba Christos, when Jerome was ordered by his superiors to set out for Ledga-negus, which he calls Liginous, in the province of Damot. He crossed the Nile for the first time in the plain of Boad, two day's journey from the sources, not on rafts, the usual way, but by jumping from rock to rock at a particular place in the river, which he says, was afterwards called the passage of Father Hieronymo. As he was going to Damot, he took care to conceal the name of Lobo, the ominous title of the king of the Galla, and very unsuitable for a Christian, much more for a man of apostolic sanctity. He remained a short time at Ledja-negus, when the violent opposition to the Catholic faith made it prudent for him to leave the province of Damot as soon as possible. In company with several other priests, he returned to Ganeta-yasous, as it should seem, by way of Dara, whence the king and his superiors ordered him back to Tigre. He remained in Tigre till the expulsion of the Catholics; and from the whole tenor of his narrative, it is improbable that he ever crossed the Nile above twice in his life.

* Azazo, Enabesse, Hadasha, Kollela, Ledja-negus, Serca, and Temhua. Boad is probably Bed.

His description is, accordingly, a plain and obvious paraphrase of the narrative of Paez. It scarcely differs from it in words, and in no original circumstance, excepting the seat which he took under the cataract of Alata. The etymology of the Abaoi, which Le Grande has changed into Abavi; the corruption of the Agows; the situation of the springs and every other particular coincide; only Lobo places them in the east, and Paez in the west, of Gojam, probably an error in Kircher's translation. What fixes beyond dispute the character of Lobo's narrative, is the exact coincidence of the depths and measures in the two accounts. Paez says that the two fountains were each 4 palms in diameter; Lobo affirms the same. Paez put a lance into the first of them, which went down 11 palms, and was stopped by the roots of the trees, which he says grew all around. Lobo's sound, he does not say of what kind it was, would only descend 11 palms, because it was interrupted, he adds, by the roots of the trees, perhaps, which grew all about. The second fountain Paez describes as being a stone's cast from the first, the very expression adopted by Lobo. Paez sounded the second fountain with two lances bound together, 20 palms long, and could find no bottom; Lobo used a sounding instrument, he does not mention of what kind, 20 palms long, and was likewise unsuccessful. It is a proper subject for calculators, to ascertain how many chances there are that two men, ignorant of one anothers procedure, will not sound two fountains with instruments exactly alike in length, or find even with these exactly the same results. If Lobo knew the measures of Paez, why did he not vary the instruments? How did he happen to have a sounding instrument of the very same length with that of Paez; or why did he limit himself by the experiment of his predecessor? The probability is, that Lobo never saw these fountains; and, as he chose to describe them, it was safer to give the account of Paez, than to devise a new one, which must have been false, as well as contradictory to that of the Apostle of Abyssinia. After this fiction, he proceeds to paraphrase the story of the subterraneous lake related by Paez; but, like most amplifications, it degenerates into caricature, when he adds, with ridiculous gravity, that he believes the surface is supported only by the roots of the trees, without which it would sink into the deep below.

It appears, from Mr Bruce's account, that no trees grow at present within less than a quarter of a mile from the sources; which are situated in a bog, that produces only grass and rushes. As the distance of time between his journey and that of Paez is only 155 years, it cannot be supposed that the trees have disappeared entirely in so short an interval, especially as they must have been of that kind which thrives in marshes, and does not decay like those which grow on dry ground, and in the course of some ages perish altogether. It is much more probable that the marsh was in the days of Paez in the same state as it is in at present; but as he had suggested an opinion that the lance was prevented from descending by the roots of trees that were not far distant (vicinarum), or in the neighbourhood, it served the purpose of Jerome Lobo to hang the marsh itself on a contexture of these, a species of foundation approaching to the miraculous. The story of his enjoying the fresh air under the cataract of Alata, which we may suppose took place about Christmas, at the time when he returned from Ledja-negus to Ganeta-Ya sous, is so palpable a fiction, that it can only be improved by the foolish observation he makes immediately after it, that he did not observe that the inhabitants around the cataract were deaf. He had heard the poetical fable, that the Nile deafens those who dwell near its cataracts *; he believed it in the literal sense, and actually spoke aloud to several of the natives, in order to ascertain the truth of this exaggeration. The account of the course of the Abay, and of the passage of the royal army over the rocks where the bridge was built in his own time, is copied from Paez, with such trifling alterations as he could easily make. His etymology of Begemder, which is fanciful, is a bad compensation for the servile and faulty manner in which he transcribes the names of the provinces from Paez's narrative, and which even the correcting hand of Le Grande could not amend. The words "Chaoa, Gamarcansa, Fazulo et Ombarca," are proofs

* This is the discovery which Dr Johnson celebrates in these words: "He meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes; his crocodiles devour their prey without tears; and his cataracts fall from the rock without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants." Vide Pref. to his Translation. Dr Johnson affirms the very reverse of what is found in Lobo's narrative.

of this. Instead of the year 1613, the date of the expedition of Ras Sela Christos, which he spells Rassela* Christos, and which Dr Johnson, by a strange blunder in oriental philology, has chosen for the name of a young prince confined in Amba-Geshen, he assigns the date 1615, probably the year in which Paez wrote the account of his discovery at Gheesh.

The reader is requested to compare the two accounts, in Latin and French, together, and satisfy himself with regard to the justice of the opinion here offered. It is obvious, that the narrative of Lobo is exactly such a paraphrase of that of Paez as a man who had been some time in the country, and wished to write on a subject of this nature, would make. Though Lobo was nearly venerated as a saint in Europe, as a travaller he is, of all the Jesuits that entered Abyssinia, the most credulous and vain. If Mr Bruce was distrusted in his account of the savage manners of the Abyssinians, and of his own conduct while in that country, how shall we believe the adventures of Father Jerome, who felt the effects of poison from one of those serpents that kill at a distance, when he was four paces from the reptile! That such serpents exist, is sufficiently problematical: that the bezoar-stone is a sovereign remedy against their effluvia, is still more doubtful. This was the talisman which saved Lobo in all his engagements with these animals, whether they attacked him with missile weapons, or came to close quarters †. On the same medical theory he seems to have prescribed to the asthmatic patient (apres avoir bien feüilleté mes livres) who consulted him in Tigre, goats urine, as a fee for which he received two measures of corn and some mutton, which, with the humour of an impostor, he assures us, he found very excellent‡.

Those who know the usual methods of discovering the relics of saint, martyrs, and other divinities of the kalendar, will be best able to judge of his successful journey to discover the bones of Don Christovam de Gama. That gallant Portuguese fell soon after an engagement with Mahomet Gragne,

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* Ras Sela-christos, contracted in pronunciation into Rasselaxôs, or Rasselas, means Sela-christos, Ras, or commander in chief of the forces of Abyssinia. He was the brother of Susneus, and a martyr to the Catholic faith.

† Relation Hist. d'Abyssinie, p. 124.

‡ Page 125.

Aug. 28, 1542, and Lobo went to search for his bones, about the year 1625, 83 years after his death. Tecla-Georgis, Kenmati of Tigre, escorted him, by order of the king, fifteen day journey, into a country (Memberta), occupied by the Galla. The body of de Gama had, it seems, been quartered by the Mahometans, and buried in several places; but Lobo was fortunate enough to discover his head and several other fragments, the remains of which he skilfully collected, and sent to India *.

With all the hypocrisy and falsehood it possesses, it is to be regretted that his narrative has not been published in the original. As Lobo was in Abyssinia, though apparently never at Gheesh, his account of the country contains some curious particulars, which illustrate and confirm many facts in these volumes. For instance, in the history of the journey to Memberta, he gives much information respecting the march of the Abyssinian armies, their encampment, the cutting down of the kantuffa, or thorns, before them, by the Shum of the district, and the furnishing of them with provision by the peasants †. He makes mention of the large size of the horns of the cattle, of the king's claiming every tenth cow once in three years, and enters minutely into the convivial and domestic manners of Abyssinia. The customs of being fed by others, of eating large pieces, and making great noise with the mouth in the act of chewing; their strong seasoning of their beef with gall, pepper, and salt, and in particular the eating of raw beef, warm from the animal, were all observed by him. "Their greatest treat," says he, p. 72, "is a piece of beef raw, and quite warm. When they give a feast, they kill an ox, and instantly serve up on the table a quarter of it with much salt and pepper; and the gall of the ox serves them for oil and vinegar. Some add to it a mustard which they call Manta, made of that which they take from the tripes of the ox, put on the fire with salt, pepper, and onions. They think their raw beef so seasoned very delicate, and eat it with the same pleasure as we would do the best partridges." He next relates their drinking beer and hydromel to excess, the freedom and licentiousness of their women, particularly

* Page 99. † Page 96.

the Ozoros, the dress of both sexes, the fine for adultery, the laxity of their marriages, and many other things which he had seen, and in which he had no motive to depart from truth.

The narrative of Lobo has been new-modelled, particularly in the orthography of words, and in such matters as could be corrected from a perusal of Ludolph's Ethiopic history, by Le Grande. Those who wish to know the liberties which that writer has taken with the accounts of the Jesuits, may consult his translation of the discovery of the sources of the Nile by Paez, from the Latin of Kircher. It is found in his Relation Hist. d'Abyssinie, p. 210. The work of Le Grande has been translated into English by Dr Johnson, who prefixed to it a pompous preface, which shews, at the same time, his want of discernment respecting the merits of books of travels, his ignorance of oriental literature, and, to use his own expression, an unhappy instance of his having at times *deflected* from the truth in his critical judgment*.

* "A Short Relation of the River Nile, of its Source and Current", an early translation from Lobo's unpublished papers, was inserted in "Transactions of the Royal Society, 1669," and from these reprinted in London, 1792, with a preface intended to affront Mr Bruce. The narrative about the springs is in page 92, and differs from Le Grande: "From the middle of this descent is seen, near a trench entangled with shrubs, the bigger of these springs, whose bottom is not to be reached with a lance of twenty and five palms, which by the way meets with (as is guessed), the roots of the neighbouring shrubs, so hindered further passage; the other spring is to be fathomed at sixteen palms." This account differs from Le Grande's and I believe both are incorrect, but particularly the English one. Paez was the first discoverer of these fountains.

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK VII.

RETURN FROM THE SOURCE OF THE NILE TO GONDAR—TRANSACTIONS THERE—BATTLE OF SERBRAXOS, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—THE AUTHOR PREPARES TO LEAVE ABYSSINIA.

CHAP. I.

Return from the Source of the Nile by Maitsha—Come to the House of Welled Amlac—Reception there—Pass the Nile at Delakus—Arrive at Gondar.

It was on the 10th of November, 1770, we left Geesh in our return to Gondar, and passed the Abay, as before, under the church of Saint Michael Sacala. We descended the hill through the wood, crossed the river Davola, and that night halted at a few huts, called Dembea, on the north-east side of the entrance of a valley.

On the 11th we continued our journey in our former road, till we arrived at the church of Abbo; we then turned to the right, our course N. by E. and at three quarters past nine, rested under the mountain on the right of the valley; our road lay still through Goutto; but the country here is neither so well inhabited nor so pleasant as the west side of the Nile. At eleven, going N. N. E. we passed the church of Tzion, about an eighth part of a mile distant to E. N. E.; we here have a distinct view of the valley through which runs the Jemma, deep, wide, and full of trees, which continue up the sides of the mountains Amid-amid. At a quarter past eleven, we passed a small stream coming from the west, and at twelve another very dangerous river called Utchmi, the ford of which is in the midst of two cataracts, and the stream very rapid; after passing this river, we entered a narrow road, in the midst of brushwood, pleasant and agreeable, and full of a kind of foxes * of a bright gold colour. At three quarters past one, we halted at the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, with whom I was well acquainted at Gondar. His house is called Welled Abea Abbo, from a church of Abbo, about an eighth part of a mile distant.

I have deferred, till the present occasion, the introducing of this remarkable character to my reader, that I might not trouble him to go back to past transactions, that are not of consequence enough to interrupt the thread of my narrative. Soon after I had seen part of the royal family, that had been infected with the small-pox, happily recovered, and was settled at Koscam in a house of my own, formerly be-

* I suppose this to be the animal called Lupus Aureus; it is nearly as large as a wolf, and lives upon moles.

longing to Basha Eusebius, my friend Ayto Aylo recommended to my care a man from Maitsha, with two servants, one of whom, with his master, had been taken ill of the intermitting fever. As I was supplied plentifully with every necessary by the Iteghe, the only inconvenience that I suffered by this was that of bringing a stranger and a disease into my family. But as I was in a strange country, and every day stood in need of the assistance of the people in it, it was necessary that I should do my part, and make myself as useful as possible when the opportunity came in my way. I therefore submitted, and, according to Ayto Aylo's desire, received my two patients with the best grace possible; and the rather, as I was told that he was one of the most powerful, resolute, and best attended robbers in all Maitsha; that he lay directly in my way to the source of the Nile; and that, under his protection, I might bid defiance to Woodage Asahel, considered as the great obstacle to my making that journey.

The servant was a poor timid wretch, exceedingly afraid of dying. He adhered strictly to his regimen, and very soon recovered. It was not so with Welled Amlac; he had, as I said, another servant, who never, that I saw, came within the door; but as often as I was out attending my other patients, or with the Iteghe, which was great part of the morning, he stole a visit to his master, and brought him as much raw meat, hydromel, and spirits, as, more than once, threw him into a fever and violent delirium. Luckily I was early informed of this by the servant that was recovered, and who did not doubt but this was to end in his master's death, as it very probably might have done, but by the interposition of Ayto Aylo and the Iteghe, we got the unworthy subject banished to Maitsha; so that Welled Amlac remained attended by

the servant who had been sick with him, and was to be trusted.

Not to trouble the reader with uninteresting particulars, Shalaka Welled Amlac at last recovered, after several weeks illness. When he first came to my house, he was but very indifferently clothed, which, in a sick man, was a thing not to be remarked. As he had no change of raiment, his clothes naturally grew worse during the time he staid with me; and, indeed, he was a very beggarly sight when his disease had entirely left him. One evening, when I was remarking, that he could not go home without kissing the ground before the Iteghe, he said, Surely not, and he was ready to go whenever I should think proper to bring him his clothes. I understood at first from this, that he might have brought some change of clothes, and delivered them into my servant's custody; but, upon farther explanation, I found he had not a rag but those upon his back; and he told me plainly, that he had much rather stay in my house all his life, than be so disgraced before the world, as to leave it after so long a stay without my first having clothed him from head to foot; asking me, with much confidence, What signifies your curing me, if you turn me out of your house like a beggar?

I still thought there was something of jest in this; and meeting Ayto Aylo that day at Koscam, I told him, laughing, of the conversation that had passed; and was answered gravely, "There is no doubt you must clothe him; to be sure it is the custom." "And his servant, too?" said I. "Certainly, his servant too; and if he had ten servants that ate and drank in your house, you must clothe them all." "I think," said I, "Ayto Aylo, a physician, at this rate, had much better let his patients die, than recover them at his own expence." "Yagoube," says he, "I see this is

not a custom in your country, but it is invariably one in this: it is not so among the lower set of people; but if you will pass here as a man of consequence, you cannot avoid this without making Welled Amlac your enemy: The man is opulent; it is not for the value of the clothes, but he thinks his importance among his neighbours is measured by the respect shewn him by people afar off; never fear, he will make you some kind of return; and for the clothes, I shall pay for them." "By no means," said I, "my good friend; I think the anecdote and custom is so curious, that it is worth the price of the clothes; and I beg that you would believe, that, intending to go through Maitsha, I consider it as a piece of friendship in you to have brought me under this obligation." "And so it is," saye he: "I knew you would think so; you are a cool dispassionate man, and walk by advice, and do not break through the customs of the country; and this reconciles even bad men to you every day, and so much the longer shall you be in safety."

The reader will not doubt, that I immediately fulfilled my obligation to Welled Amlac, who received his clothes, a girdle, and a pair of sandals, in all to the amount of about two guineas, with the same indifference as if he had been buying them for ready money. He then asked for his servant's clothes, which were ready for him. He only said, he thought they were too good, and hinted as if he should take them for his own use when he went to Maitsha. I then carried him new-dressed to the Iteghe, who gave him strict injunctions to take care of me, if ever I should come into his hands. He after went home with Ayto Aylo; nor did I ever know what was become of him till now, when we arrived at his house at Welled Abea Abbo, unless from some words that fell in discourse from Fasil at Bamba.

Shalaka Welled Amlac was, however, from home, but his wife, mother, and sisters, received us kindly, knowing us by report; and, without waiting for our landlord, a cow was instantly slaughtered.

The venerable mistress of this worthy family, Welled Amlac's mother, was a very stout, cheerful woman, and bore no signs of infirmity or old age: his wife was, on the contrary, as arrant a hag as ever acted the part on the stage; very active, however, and civil, and speaking very tolerable Amharic. His two sisters, about sixteen or seventeen, were really handsome; but Fasil's wife, who was there, was the most beautiful and graceful of them all; she seemed not to be past eighteen, tall, thin, and of a very agreeable carriage and manners. The features of her face were very regular; she had fine eyes, mouth, and teeth, and dark-brown complexion; at first sight, a cast of melancholy seemed to hang upon her countenance, but this soon vanished, and she became very courteous, cheerful, and most conversible of the whole, or, at least, seemed to wish to be so; for, unfortunately, she spoke not a word of any language but Galla, though she understood a little Amharic. Our conversation did not fail to give great entertainment to the whole family; and for her part, she laughed beyond all measure.

The two sisters had been out helping my servants in disposing the baggage; but when they had pitched my tent, and were about to lay the mattress for sleeping on, the eldest of these interrupted them, and not being able to make herself understood by the Greeks, she took it up, and threw it out of the tent-door; whilst no abuse, or opprobrious names, were spared by my servants; one of whom came to tell me her impudence, and that, if they understood her, she said I was to sleep with her this night, and they believed

we were got into a house of thieves and murderers. To this I answered by a sharp reproof, desiring them to conform to every thing the family ordered them. I saw the fair nymph was in a violent passion; she told her tale to the matrons with great energy, and a volubility of tongue past imagination; and they all laughed. Fasil's wife called me to sit by her, and began to instruct me, drolly enough, as they do children; but of what she said I had not the smallest guess. I endeavoured always to repeat her last words; and this occasioned another vehement laugh, in which I joined as heartily as any, to keep up the joke, for the benefit of the company, as long as possible.

Immediately after this Welled Amlac arrived, and brought us the disagreeable news, that it was impossible to proceed to the ford of the Abay, as two of the neighbouring Shums were at variance about their respective districts, and in a day or two would decide it by blows. The faces of all our companions fell at these news; but as I knew the man, it gave me little trouble, as I supposed the meaning to be, that, if we made it worth while, he would accompany us himself, and in that case we should pass without fear; at any rate, I well knew, that, after the obligations I had laid him under at Gondar, he could not, consistent with the received usages of the country, if it was but for his own reputation's sake, fail in receiving me in the very best manner in his power, and entertaining me to the utmost all the time I was in his house.

Satisfied that I understood him, he put on the most cheerful countenance. Another cow was killed, great plenty of hydromel produced, and he prepared to regale us as sumptuously as possible, after the manner of the country. We were there, as often before, obliged to overcome our repugnance to eating raw flesh. Shalaka Welled Amlac set us the example, entertain-

ed us with the stories of his hunting elephants, and feats in the last wars, mostly roguish ones. The room where we were, (which was indeed large, and contained himself, mother, wife, sisters, his horses, mules, and servants, night and day) was all hung round with the trunks of these elephants, which he had brought from the neighbouring Kolla, near Guesgue, and killed with his own hands; for he was one of the boldest and best horsemen in Abyssinia, and perfectly master of his arms.

This Polyphemus feast being finished, the horn of hydromel went briskly about. Welled Amlac's eldest sister, whose name was Melectanea, took a particular charge of me, and I began to find the necessity of retiring and going to bed while I was able. Here the former story came over again; the invariable custom of all Maitsha and the country of the Galla, of establishing a relationship by sleeping with a near of kin, was enlarged upon; and, as the young lady herself was present, and presented every horn of drink during this polite dispute concerning her person, I do not know whether it will not be thought a greater breach of delicacy to have refused than to have complied:—

> But what success Vanessa met
> Is to the world a secret yet;
> Can never to mankind be told,
> Nor shall the conscious muse unfold.

Fye upon the conscious muse, says Lord Orrery; and fye, too, say I:—A man of honour and gallantry should not permit himself such a hint as this, though the Red Sea was between him and his mistress.

It was impossible to sleep; the whole night was one continued storm of thunder, rain, and lightning; the morning was clearer, and my people very urgent to go

away; but I had still to settle with Zor Woldo, who had been kept by his mistress, Fasil's wife, notwithstanding his master's orders, till he had told her the whole circumstances of our expedition, and made her laugh heartily at the oddity of our sentiments and customs. This she repaid to him by plentiful horns of mead and bouza, as also large collops of raw meat, which made him a very eloquent historian; whether or not he was a faithful one, I cannot possibly judge.

After having settled with him to his perfect satisfaction, and cancelled entirely the memory of some disagreeable things passed, he consigned us very solemnly to Ayto Aylo's servant, in presence of Welled Amlac, and had taken his leave, when a very fine white cow was brought to the door of the tent, from Fasil's wife, who insisted, as a friend of her husband, that I should stay that day for her sake; and I should either learn her my language, or she would teach me Galla. The party was accepted as soon as offered; the morning was fresh and cool, nor had last night's libation any way disordered my stomach. Strates himself, though afraid of Welled Amlac, and exceedingly exasperated at the impudent behaviour, as he called it, of Melectanea, was, however, a little pacified at the approach of the white cow. "Brother," says he to Michael, "we have nothing to do with people's manners, as long as they are civil to us: as to this house, there is no doubt but the men are robbers and murderers, and their women wh—es; but if they use us well while we are now here, and we are so lucky as to get to Gondar alive, let the devil take me if ever I seek again to be at Welled Abea-Abbo." It was agreed to relax that day, and dedicate it to herborizing, as also to the satisfying the curiosity of our female friends, by answering all their questions; and thus the forenoon passed as agreeably as possible.

Welled Amlac, a great hunter, had gone with me early to a neighbouring thicket on horseback, armed with lances in search of venison, though we certainly did not want provisions. We, in a few minutes, raised two bohur, a large animal of the deer kind, and each pursued his beast. Mine had not run 400 yards before I overtook him, and pierced him with my pike; and the same would have happened probably to the other, had not Welled Amlac's horse put his fore-feet into a fox's hole, which threw him and his rider headlong to the ground. He was not, however, hurt, but rose very gravely, and desired me to return; it being a rule with these people, never to persist when any thing unfortunate falls out in the beginning of a day.

Our company was now increased by our former landlord at Goutto, where we were obliged to Woldo's stratagem for discovering the cow that was hid. We sat down cheerfully to dinner. Welled Amlac's fall had not spoiled his appetite; I think he eat equal to four ordinary men. I, for the most part, eat the venison, which was made into an excellent dish, only too much stuffed with all kind of spices. Fasil's wife alone seemed to have a very poor appetite; notwithstanding her violent fits of laughter, and outward appearance of cheerfulness, a melancholy gloom returned upon her beautiful face, that seemed to indicate a mind not at ease. She was of a noble family of Galla, which had conquered and settled in the low country of Narea. I wondered that Fasil, her husband, had not carried her to Gondar. She said her husband had twenty other wives besides her, but took none of them to Gondar; which was a place of war, where it was the custom to marry the wives of their enemies that they had forced to fly: Fasil will be married therefore to Michael's wife, Ozoro Esther. I could not help being startled at this declaration, remembering

that I was here losing my time, and forgetting my word of returning as soon as possible; but we had, for many months, lived in such constant alarms, that it was absolutely as needful to seize the moment in which we could repose our mind, as to give rest to the body.

In the afternoon we distributed our presents among the ladies. Fasil's wife was not forgot; and the beautiful Melectanea was covered with beads, handkerchiefs, and ribbands of all colours. Fasil's wife, on my first request, gave me a lock of her fine hair from the root, which has ever since, and at this day does suspend a plummet of an ounce and half at the index of my three-feet quadrant.

The next morning, the 13th of November, having settled our account with our host, we set out from the hospitable house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, after having engaged, by promises to the ladies, that we should pay them soon another visit. Our landlord accompanied us in person to the ford, and by this, and his readiness to shew us what he thought worthy of our curiosity, and by his care in ascertaining for us the distances and situations of places, he gave us a certain proof he was well contented, and therefore that we had nothing to fear.

We had both nights heard the noise of cataracts, and we thought it might be of the Nile, as we were in fact but five miles from the second small cataract at Kerr, which lay W. S. W. of us. We were informed, however, in the morning, that it was the sound of falls in the river Jemma, near whose banks this house is situated. We set out at eight o'clock, the hills of Aroossi bearing north; and at half past eight we came to the ford of the Jemma, which is strong, rugged, and uneven.

The Jemma here comes from the east; its banks are most beautifully shaded with acacia and other trees, growing as on the west of the Nile, that is, the trunks or stems of the trees at a distance, but the tops touching each other, and spreading broad. Though growing to no height, these woods are full of game of different kinds, mostly unknown in Europe. The bohur is here in great numbers; also the buffalo, though not so frequent. Whoever sees Richmond hill has an idea of the banks of the Jemma, and the country east of it, with all that addition that an eastern and happier climate can give it; for the rains had now ceased, and every hill was in flower; the sun indeed was hot, but a constant and fresh breeze prevented its being felt near the river. The heat in this country ceases in the warmest day, the moment we pass from the sun to the shade: we have none of these hot winds or violent reflections which we had suffered in Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, and both the coasts of the Red Sea.

There are two cataracts lower than this ford of the Jemma, the first about 300 yards below the ford, and another larger, something about half a mile; it is not, however, more than seven or eight feet high, perhaps about ninety feet broad, and the sheet of water is not entire, but is interrupted in many places. It falls, however, into a magnificent bason above 400 yards square, and very deep, in which are large fish in great plenty, but no crocodiles; nor indeed are there any seen, as I have heard, above the third cataract, nor considerably below, when, after having made the tour of Gojam, it again turns northward towards its sources. The gomari, however, often come to the mouth of the Jemma, especially when the first rains fall; the crocodile seems to require a warmer climate.

After having satisfied our curiosity as to the Jemma, I began to reproach those that were with me about the panic which they felt the night before; these were, a Greek of Gondar, Strates, and three others, my servants whom I brought from Cairo. "You see," said I, "what danger there is; Wellad Amlac is with us upon a mule, without a lance or shield, and only two naked servants with him; did not I tell you what was the meaning of the news?" Though this was spoken in a language of which it was impossible Amlac could know a syllable, yet he presently apprehended in part what I would say. "I see," says he, "you believe what I told you last night to be false, and invented only to get from you a present: but you shall see; and if this day we do not meet Welled Aragawi and his soldiers, you are then in the right; it is as you imagine."—"You do me wrong," said I, "and have not understood me, for how should you? Those white people believe too well all you told them, and are only apprehensive of your not being able to defend us, being without arms and followers. All I said was, that where you were, armed or unarmed, there was no danger."—"True," says he, "you are now in Maitsha, and not in my country, which is Goutto; you are now in the worst country in all Abyssinia, where the brother kills his brother for a loaf of bread, of which he has no need: you are in a country of Pagans, or dogs, Galla, and worse than Galla; if ever you meet an old man here, he is a stranger; all that are natives die by the lance young; and yet, though these two chieftains I mentioned fight to-day, unarmed as I am, (as you well said) you are in no danger while I am with you. These people of Maitsha, shut up between the Jemma, the Nile, and the lake, have nowhere but from the Agows to get what they want; and they come to the

same market with us here in Goutto; the fords of the Jemma, they know, are in my hands; and did they offer an injury to a friend of mine, were it but to whistle as he passed them, they know I am not gentle; though not a Galla, they are sensible, one day or other, I should call them to account, though it were in the bed-chamber of their master Fasil."

"Your master, Welled Amlac, with your leave," said I. "Yes, mine too," said he, "by force, but he never shall be my master by inclination, after murdering Kasmati Eshte. He calls me his brother, and believes me his friend. You saw one of his wives, whom he leaves at my house, last night, but I hope still to see him and his Galla slaughtered as the cow in my house was yesterday." "I am surprised," said I, "Your house was spared, and that Ras Michael did not burn it in either of his passages through Maitsha."—"In 1769," replied he, "I was not with Fasil at Fagitta, and the Ras passed the Nile above this far beyond the Kelti; after which I returned with him to Gondar. In Ginbot *, Fasil informed us that Amhara and Begemder were come over to him. When then all Maitsha joined Fasil, I went with my people to meet Michael at Derdera, as I knew he must pass the Nile here opposite to Abbo, and Begemder and Amhara would then be behind him, or else try to cross at Delakus, which was then swollen with rain and unfordable: but apprehensive lest, marching still higher up along the Nile to find a ford, he might burn my house in his way, I myself joined him the night before he knew of Powussen's revolt, and he had it then in contemplation to burn Samseen. The next morning was that of his retreat, and he chose

* The 1st of Ginbot is the 26th of our April.

me to accompany him across the Nile, still considering me as his friend, and therefore, perhaps, he would have done no harm to my house"—"So it was you," said I, "that led us that day into that cursed clay-hole which you call a ford, where so many people and beasts were maimed and lost?"—He replied, "It was Fasil's spies that first persuaded him to pass there or at Kerr. I kept him to the place where you passed; you would have all perished at Kerr. This, to be sure, was not a good ford, nor passable at all except in summer, unless by swimming; but so many men crossing had made it still worse; besides, do you remember what a storm it was? what a night of rain? O Lady Mariam, always a virgin, said I, while they struggled in the mud and clay, O holy Abba Guebra Menfus Kedus, who never ate or drank from his mother's womb till his death, will you not open the earth, that all this accursed multitude may descend alive into hell, like Dathan and Abiram?"—A kind and charitable prayer!—"I thank you for it, Welled Amlac," said I; "first, for carrying us to that charitable ford, where with one of the strongest and ablest horses in the world, I had nearly perished:—and, secondly, for your pious wish, to dispose of us out of the regions of rain and cold into so warm quarters in company with Dathan and Abiram!"

"I did not know you was there," says he; "I heard you had staid at Gondar in order to bring up the black horse. I saw a white person * with the Ras, indeed, who had a good hanjar and gun, but his mule was weak, and he himself seemed sick. As I returned I could have carried him off in the night,

* This was Francisco, who was sick.

but I said, perhaps it is the brother of Yagoube, my friend and physician; he is white like him, and for your sake I left him. I was much with you white people in the time of Kasmati Eshte."—"And pray," said I, "what did you after we passed the Abay?"—"After I saw that devil Ras Michael over," said Welled Amlac, "I returned under pretence of assisting Kefla Yasous there, and being joined by all my people, we fell upon the stragglers wherever we found them. You know what a day of rain it was; we took 17 guns, 12 horses, and about 200 mules and asses laden, and so returned home, leaving the rest to Fasil, who, if he had been a man, should have cut you all to pieces the day after."—"And what did you," said I, "with these stragglers whom you met and robbed; did you kill them?"—"We always kill them," answered Amlac; "we spare none; we never do a man an injury, and leave him alive to revenge it upon us after; but it was really the same; they were all sick and weak, and the hyæna would have finished them in the morning, so it was just saving them so much suffering to kill them outright the night before; and I assure you, Yagoube, whatever you may think, I did not do it out of malice." From this conversation one may sufficiently guess what sort of a man Welled Amlac was, and what were his ideas of mercy.

We passed the church of Kedus Michael at half after nine, on the road to our right. At nine and three quarters our course was N. by W. and at a quarter after ten, we passed the Coga, a large river. At three quarters past ten our course was north. We passed the church of Abbo a quarter of a mile on our right. The country, after we had crossed the Jemma, was much less beautiful than before. At twelve our course was N. by W. and at half past twelve the church of

Mariam Net, 200 yards to the left; and here we forded the small river Amlac Ohha. Every step of this ground put us in mind of our disastrous campaign in May; and we were now passing directly in the tract of the ever-memorable retreat of Kefla Yasous and the rear of the army. At a quarter after one we halted at a small village of low houses, as it were in bent grass, where, for the first time, we saw flocks of goats lying on the tops of the houses for fear of wild beasts.

"You shall see," says Welled Amlac, "whether I am telling truth or not: this is the house of Welled Aragawi; if he is here at home, then I have deceived you." We saw a number of women laden with jars of bouza and hydromel, and asked where they were going. They said to their master at Delakus, who waited there to prevent Welleta Michael of Degwassa from passing the river. Our Greeks on this began to relapse into their panic, and to wish we were again at Welled Abea Abbo. At three quarters past one we continued our journey to the north, and passed a river, called Amlac-Ohha, larger than the former: it comes from the east, and, half a mile further, receives the other stream already mentioned. The sun was now burning hot. At three o'clock we halted a quarter of an hour; and, beginning to descend gently, an hour after this we came to the banks of the Abay. Here we saw the two combatants, Welleta Michael and Welled Aragawi, exactly opposite to each other, the first on the west, the other on the east side; they had settled all their differences, and each had killed several kine for themselves and friends, which was all the blood shed that day.

The Nile is here a considerable river; its breadth at this time full three quarters of an English mile; the current is very gentle; where deep you scarce can

perceive it flow; it comes from W. by S. and W. S. W. and at the ford runs east and west. The banks on the east side were very high and steep; and on the west, at the first entrance, the bottom is soft and bad, the water four feet and a half deep, but above another foot, which we sink in clay. I cried to Welled Amlac, while he was leading my mule across, that he should not pray to his saint that never eats, as at the passage of the Abay in May. He only answered lowly to me, "Do you think these thieves would have let you pass if I was not with you?" My answer was, "Welleta Michael would not have seen me wronged; I saved his life, he and every body knows it."

We gained with difficulty the middle of the river, where the bottom was firm, and there we rested a little. Whilst we were wading near the other side, we found foul ground, but the water was shallow, and the banks low and easy to ascend. The river side, as far as we could see, is bare and destitute of wood of any kind, only bordered with thistles and high grass, and the water tinged deep with red earth, of which its banks are composed. This passage is called Delakus, and is passable from the end of October to the middle of May. Immediately on the top of the hill ascending from the river, is the small town of Delakus, which gives this ford its name; it extends from N. E. to N. N. E. and is more considerable in appearance than is the generality of those small towns, or villages, in Abyssinia, because inhabited by Mahometans only, a trading, frugal, intelligent, and industrious people.

Our conductor, Welled Amlac, again put us in mind of the service he had rendered us, and we were not unmindful of him. He had been received with very great respect by the eastern body of combatants, and it is incredible with what expedition he swallowed near a pound of raw flesh, cut from the buttocks of

the animal yet alive. After some horns of hydromel, he had passed to the other side, where he was received with still more affection, if possible, by Welleta Michael, and there he began again to eat the raw meat with an appetite as keen as if he had fasted for whole days: he then consigned us to Ayto Welleta Michael, his friend and mine, who furnished us with a servant to conduct us on our way, while he himself remained that night at the ford among the combatants. He advised us to advance as far as possible; for all that country was destroyed by a malignant fever, which laid all waste beyond Delakus.

We left the ford at a quarter past five in the evening; and, pursuing our journey north, we passed the small town of Delakus, continuing along the hill among little spots of brushwood and small fields of corn intermixed. At half past six, passed the river Avola. At half past seven, crossed another swift-running stream, clear and shallow, but full of slippery stones. At three quarters after seven we alighted at Googue, a considerable village, and as it was now night, we could go no farther. We had already several times mistaken our way, and lost each other in the dark, having often also been mired in a small plain before we passed the last river; but our guide had heard the orders of his master, and pushed on briskly.

We found the people of Googue the most savage and inhospitable we had yet met with. Upon no account would they suffer us to enter their houses, and we were obliged to remain without, the greatest part of the night. At last they carried us to a house of good appearance, but refused absolutely to give us meat for ourselves, or horses; and, as we had not force, we were obliged to be content. It had rained violently in the evening, and we were all wet. We contented ourselves with lighting a large fire in the middle of

the house, which we kept burning all night, as well for guard, as for drying ourselves, though we little knew at the time that it was probably the only means of saving our lives; for, in the morning, we found the whole village sick of the fever, and two families had died out of the house where these people had put us; for my own part, upon hearing this, I was more affrighted than for Welled Aragawi and all his robbers. Though weary and wet, I had slept on the ground near the fire six whole hours; and, though really well, I could not during the day persuade myself there was not some symptom of fever upon me. My first precaution was to infuse a dose of bark into a glass of aquavitæ, a large horn of which we had with us; we then burnt frankincence and myrrh in abundance, and fumigated ourselves, as practised at Masuah and in Arabia. Early in the morning we repeated our dose of bark and fumigation. Whether the bark prevented the disease or not, the aquavitæ certainly strengthened the spirits, and was a medicine to the imagination.

The people, who saw the eagerness and confidence with which we swallowed this medicine, flocked about us demanding assistance. I confess I was so exasperated with their treatment of us, and especially that of lodging us in the infected house, that I constantly refused them their request, leaving them a prey to their distemper, to teach them another time more hospitality to strangers.

This fever prevailed in Abyssinia in all low grounds and plains, in the neighbourhood of all rivers which run in vallies; it is really a malignant tertian, which, however, has so many forms and modes of intermission, that it is impossible for one not of the Faculty to describe it. It is not in all places equally dangerous; but on the banks and neighbourhood of the Tacazze it is particularly fatal. The valley where that river

runs is very low and sultry, being full of large trees. In Kuara, too, it is very mortal; in Belessen and Dembea less so; in Walkayt it is dangerous, but not so much in Tzegade, Kolla, Woggora, and Waldubba. It does not prevail in the high grounds, or mountains, or in places much exposed to the air.—This fever is called Nedad, or burning; it begins always with a shivering and headach, a heavy eye, and inclination to vomit; a violent heat follows, which leaves little intermission, and ends generally in death the third or fifth day. In the last stage of the distemper, the belly swells to an enormous size, or sometimes immediately after death, and the body, within an instant, smells most insupportably; to prevent which they bury the corpse immediately after the breath is out, and often within the hour. The face has a remarkable yellow appearance, with a blackish cast, as in the last stage of a dropsy, or the atrophy. This fever begins immediately with the sun-shine, after the first rains, that is, where there are intervals of rain and sun-shine: it ceases upon the earth being thoroughly soaked in July and August, and begins again in September; but now, at the beginning of November, it finally ceases everywhere.

The country about Googue is both fertile and pleasant, all laid out in wheat, and the grain good. They were now in the midst of their harvest; but there were some places, to which the water could be conducted, where the corn was just appearing out of the ground. From Googue we have an extensive view of the lake Tzana, whilst the mountains of Begemder and Karoota, that is, all the ridge along Foggora, appear distinctly enough, but they are sunk low, and near the horizon.

On the 14th, at three quarters past seven in the morning, we left the inhospitable village Googue; our road lay N. by W. up a small hill. At half pa-

eight we crossed the village of Azzadari, in which runs a small river, then almost stagnant, of the same name. At three quarters after eight, the church of Turcon Abbo, being a quarter of a mile to our right. At three quarters after nine we passed the river Avolai, coming from N. W. and which, with all the other streams above mentioned, falls into the lake: from this begins Degwassa. At half past ten we rested half an hour. At eleven continued our journey N. by W. and, at half after eleven, entered again into the great road of Bure, by Kelti. All the country from Googue is bare, unpleasant, unwholesome, and ill-watered. Those few streams it has are now standing in pools, and are probably stagnant in January and February. The people, too, are more miserable than in any other part of Maitsha and Goutto.

As we are now leaving Maitsha, it will be the place to say something concerning it in particular. Maitsha is either proper, or what is called so by extension.—Maitsha Proper is bounded on the west by the Nile, on the south by the river Jemma, dividing it from Goutto; and, on the other side of Amid-amid, by the province of Damot; on the south by Gojam; on the east and north by the Abay, or Nile, and the lake: this is Maitsha Proper; but, by extension, it comprehends a large tract on the west side of the Nile, which begins by Sankraber on the north, and is bounded by the Agows on the west, comprehending Atcheffer and Aroossi to the banks of the Nile. This is the Maitsha of the books, but is not properly so.

Maitsha is governed by ninety-nine Shums, and is an appendage of the office of Betwudet, to whom it pays two thousand ounces of gold. The people are originally of those Galla west of the Abay. Yasous the Great, when at war with that people, who, in many preceding reigns, had laid waste the provinces of Gojam and Damot, and especially Agow-midre, when he

passed the Abay found these people at variance among themselves; and the king, who was everywhere victorious, being joined by the weakest, advanced to Narea, and, on his return, transplanted these Galla into Maitsha, placing part of them along the Nile to guard the passes. His successors, at different times, followed his example; part they settled in Maitsha, and part along the banks of the Nile in Damot and Gojam, where, being converted to Christianity, at least to such Christianity as is professed in Abyssinia, they have increased exceedingly, and amounted, at least before the war in 1768, to 15,000 men, of whom about 4000 are horsemen.

The capital of Maitsha is Ibaba. There is here a house or small castle belonging to the king. The town is one of the largest in Abyssinia, little inferior to Gondar in size or riches, and has a market every day; this is governed by an officer called Ibaba Azage, whose employment is worth 600 ounces of gold, and is generally conferred upon the principal person of Maitsha, to keep him firm in his allegiance, as there is a very considerable territory depends upon this office. The country round Ibaba is the most pleasant and fertile, not of Maitsha only, but of all Abyssinia, especially that part called Kollela, between Ibaba and Gojam, where the principal Ozoros have all houses and possessions, called Goult or Fiefs, which they have received from their respective ancestors when kings.

Though Maitsha be peculiarly the appendage of the Betwudet, and governed by him, yet it has a particular political government of its own. The ninety-nine Shums, who are each a distinct family of Galla, choose a king, like the Pagan Galla, every seventh year, with all the ceremonies anciently observed while they were Pagans; and these governors have much more influence

over them than the King or Betwudet; so they have (in my time at least) been in a constant rebellion, and that has much lessened their numbers, which will not now amount to above 10,000 men; Ras Michael having everywhere destroyed their houses, and carried into slavery their wives and children, who have been sold to the Mahometan merchants, and transported to Masuah, and from thence to Arabia.

At twelve o'clock, Guesgue was to the right, three or four, perhaps more, miles; and the very rugged mountains Casercla, broken and full of precipices, on our right, at about 12 miles distance; they rise from Kolla. Guesgue, which, though the language and race be Agow, is not comprehended in the government of that country, but generally goes with Kuara. At a quarter past one we arrived at the house of Ayto Welleta Michael, at Degwassa, after entering into a country something more pleasant and cultivated than the former. The village of Degwassa is but small; it had also been burnt in the late war; it is pleasantly situated on a hill south of the lake, about 3 miles distance, and is surrounded with large wanzy-trees; we were but ill-received at this village, notwithstanding the promises of the master of it at the passage of the Abay, and we found these people scarcely more hospitable than at Googue. This village is a little out of the road, to the right. We had travelled this day five hours and a half, or little more than ten miles.

On the 15th of November, from Degwassa we entered Gonzala, immediately bordering upon it: heavy rain prevented our setting out till noon. Gonzala is full of villages, and belongs to the queen-mother. At a quarter after one we passed a large marsh, in the midst of which runs a small river which here falls into the lake. We rested here half an hour; and, at

three quarters past one, we entered the great road which we had passed to the left in going to Degwassa. At two o'clock we came still to a more distinct view of the lake, as also where the river enters and goes out; it appears here to enter at S. W. and go out at N. E. and is distant about eight or nine miles. At three quarters past two, we arrived at Dingleber, having this day travelled only two hours and a half, or five miles.

On the 16th we left Dingleber at seven o'clock in the morning; it was very hot; and, a little before we came to Mescalaxos, in a stripe of land, or peninsula, which runs out into the lake, we halted a short time under the shade of some acacia-trees. Here we saw plenty of water-fowl, and several gomaris. A small river crosses the road here, and falls into the lake: and, at one o'clock in the afternoon, we continued our journey, and overtook a troop of Agows, who were going to Gondar, laden with honey, butter, and untanned hides. They had with them also about 800 head of cattle. These people, accustomed to the road (though heavily laden), go long journies: they had at this time 50 miles to make by nine o'clock in the morning of the 18th, and it was now the 16th, past one o'clock.

A shower overtook us soon after passing Mescalaxos, and forced us to take refuge in some small huts near the lake called Goja, where we remained. The inhabitants of this and the neighbouring villages speak Falasha, the language anciently of all Dembea, which, as has been already observed, in most of the plain country, has now given place to Amharic. Here we saw two gomari come out of the lake and enter the corn, but speedily, upon the dogs of the villages attacking them, they ran and plunged into the water; we could not have a distinct view of them, nor time enough to

design them, but they were very different from any draught we had ever seen of them. The head seemed to me to resemble that of a hog more than of a horse. We had this day travelled six hours and a half, or about thirteen miles.

On the 17th, at a quarter past seven, we left Goja. At one o'clock we halted at Sar Ohha, after a journey of five hours and a half, or about eleven miles; and on the 18th, at half past six, left Sar Ohha. At three quarters past seven we passed the river Talti, and at half past eleven halted at Abba Abram, near the church, under a large sassa-tree. At one continued our journey, and at a quarter past two arrived at Kemona.

On the 19th of November, at seven in the morning, we left Kemona; and going constantly without stopping by Chergue and Azazo, I sent my servants and baggage on to Abba Samuel at Gondar, where they arrived at one o'clock afternoon, and finished our long-projected expedition, or journey, to the fountains of the Nile, having, in our return home, made as it were the chord of the arch of our former journey, or about ninety-three miles, with which we found our points, as settled by observation, did very nearly agree.

Two things chiefly occupied my mind, and prevented me from accompanying my servants and baggage into Gondar. The first was my desire of instantly knowing the state of Ozoro Esther's health: the second was, to avoid Fasil, till I knew a little more about Ras Michael and the king. Taking one servant along with me, I left my people at Azazo, and turning to the left, up a very craggy steep mountain, I made the utmost diligence I could till I arrived at the gate of Koscam, near two o'clock, without having

met any one from Fasil, who was encamped opposite to Gondar, on the Kahha, on the side of the hill, so that I had passed obliquely behind him. He had, however, seen or heard of the arrival of my servants at Gondar, and had sent for me to wait upon him in his camp; and when he was informed I had gone forward to Koscam, it was said he had uttered some words of discontent.

I went straight to the Iteghe's apartment, but was not admitted, as she was at her devotions. In crossing one of the courts, however, I met a slave of Ozoro Esther, who, instead of answering the question I put to her, gave a loud shriek and went to inform her mistress. I found that princess greatly recovered, as her anxiety about Fasil had ceased. She had admitted him to an audience, and he had communicated to her the engagement he was under to her husband, as also the conduct he intended to pursue in order to keep Gusho and Powussen from taking any effectual measures which might frustrate, or at least delay, the restoration of the king, and arrival of Ras Michael.

CHAP. II.

Fasil's insidious Behaviour—Arrival at Gondar—King passes the Tacazze—Iteghe and Socinios fly from Gondar.

I SHALL now resume the history of Abyssinia itself, so far as I was concerned in it, or had an opportunity of knowing; and this I shall follow as closely as possible, till I begin my return home through those dreary and hitherto-unknown deserts of Sennaar, though not the most entertaining, yet by far the most dangerous and most difficult part of the voyage.

About the 20th of October, Woodage Asahel came with a strong body of horse into the neighbourhood of Gondar, and cut off all communication between the capital and those provinces to the southward of it. This occasioned a temporary famine, as his troops plundered all those they met on the road carrying provisions to the market. At first he refused to tell what his real errand was; but, a few days after, having passed the low country of Dembea, he took post at Dingleber, on the road to Maitsha and the country of the Agows; and then he declared his only intention in coming was to join Fasil, then marching to Gondar at the head of a large army; nor was the cause of that great army, nor the reason of Fasil's com-

ing, so sufficiently known as to free any party entirely from their apprehensions.

Sanuda, who filled the office of Ras, and the rest of that party, endeavoured to determine Asahel to enter Gondar, and pay his homage to Socinios, now king; not doubting but his example would have the effect of making others do the like; and that so by degrees they might collect troops enough to make Michael respect them, so far at least as to defer for a season his march from Tigre. They prevailed, indeed, so far as to engage Asahel to enter Gondar on the 28th of October, the day that we left it; so, by a few hours, and his taking a low road that he might plunder the villages in Dembea, we missed a meeting of the most dangerous and most disagreeable kind. After having made his usual parade, and passed his cavalry in review before Socinios, he had his public audience; where he said he came charged by Fasil to declare that he was ready to set out for Gondar, and bring with him that part of the revenue due to the king from the province he commanded, provided he had a man of sufficient trust to leave in his stead at home; that therefore he prayed the king to appoint him Woodage Asahel to command in the province of Damot, Maitsha, and Agow, in his absence.

After the many promises and engagements Fasil had made and broken, without ever assigning the smallest reason, it may be doubted whether Socinios believed this fair tale implicitly; but his present intention being to gain Woodage, it little signified whether it was strictly true or not; he therefore received it as true. Fasil's request was granted to the full; and this robber, twenty times a rebel, bred up in woods and deserts, in exercise of every crime, was appointed to a command the third in the kingdom for

rank power, and riches; and what was never before seen, the king went out of his palace to Deppabye, the public market-place, to see the circle of gold, called the ras-werk, put upon his head; this, with the white and blue mantle, invests him with the dignity of Kasmati, or lieutenant-general of the king, in the province given him.

A low man, such as Asahel was, could not resist the caresses of his sovereign; he was entirely gained; and, in return, made privately to Socinios, and a few confidents, a communication of all he knew, which their natural imprudence, and private previous engagements, afterwards made public. The substance of this confidence was, that peace had been made and sworn to, in the most solemn manner, both by Michael and Fasil; that they were to restore the king, Tecla Haimanout; that they were, by their joint means, to effect, if possible, the ruin of Gusho and Powussen, governors of Begemder and Amhara; Fasil was to enjoy the post of Ras and Betwudet, and to dispose of the government of Begemder and Amhara to his friends; Ras Michael was to content himself with the province of Tigre, as he then enjoyed it, and advance no further than the river Tacazze, where he was to deliver the king to Fasil, and return to his province. Sanuda was, in the mean time, to appear as Ras, by the connivance of Fasil and Michael; and, if he saw the people of the Iteghe's party resolved upon electing a king, he was to take care to choose such a one as would prove himself incapable of reigning, but fill the vacancy in the mean time, and prevent the election from falling upon a worthier candidate from the mountain of Wechne. Fasil, on his part, undertook by promises and proposals, and occasionally by the approach of his army, to frighten and confuse the Iteghe, and prevent a good

understanding taking place between her, Gusho, and Powussen. The last article of this treaty was, that no more should be said of Joas the late king's murder, but all that transaction was to be buried in eternal oblivion. This peace, Asahel had said, was made by the mediation of Welleta Selasse, nephew of Ras Michael, whom we have often mentioned as having been taken prisoner by Fasil at the battle of Limjour.

This discovery dangerous as it might have been in other times and circumstances, from the weakness of the present government, had no consequences hurtful to any concerned in it. Sanuda, who was not present when Asahel revealed the secret, affected to laugh at it as an improbable fiction; and though this whole scheme of treachery was confirmed, part by part, yet it was so deeply laid, and so well supported, that even when discovered, it could not be prevented, till, step by step, it was carried into execution.

Fasil was encamped at Bamba, as we have already mentioned; he had discharged all those savage Galla that he had brought from the other side of the Nile. As soon as he had heard in how favourable a manner Woodage Asahel had been received, he decamped, taking with him 400 horse and 600 foot, all chosen men, from Maitsha and Damot, and with these he advanced, by forced marches, to Gondar, where he arrived the 2d of November, to the surprise of the whole town and court; for he had already so often promised, and so often broken his word, that nobody pretended to guess more about him till they actually saw him arrived. That same evening he waited on the queen, where he made a short visit; he paid one still shorter to the king, and no business passed at either of these meetings.

The king, Socinios, was now more than ever confirmed in the belief of Asahel's information; because,

notwithstanding that Fasil knew perfectly his necessities, and that for seven years he had not paid a farthing to the revenue, he still had not brought either payment, or present of either sort; and instead of coming with a large army to give battle to Ras Michael, he arrived as in peace, with scarce a body guard; and what seemed to put the matter beyond all doubt, that the very night of his arrival, upon coming from his audience, he set Welleta Selasse at liberty, and sent him to Tigre to his uncle Ras Michael, loaded with many presents, and with every mark of respect. There were, however, about Socinios, some people of wisdom enough to counsel him to take no notice of this behaviour of Fasil, which seemed to savour strongly of defiance; and he was wise enough for a short time to follow their advice. As he had, by fair means, gained Woodage Asahel, he thought he might, by pursuing the conduct, succeed with Fasil also.

In the morning therefore, of the 3d of November, without attempting further discussion, proclamation was made that Fasil was Ras and Betwudet, governor of Damot, Maitsha, and Agow, and had the disposal of all places under the king throughout the empire; declaring also, that all appointments that had been made by the Iteghe and himself, in Fasil's absence, were null and void, to be again filled up by Fasil only. Socinios, however, soon found that he had a different spirit to manage than that of Woodage Asahel. Fasil took him at his word, accepted of the appointment, began immediately to exercise his power, and the very first day he gave the post of Cantiba, that is, governor of Dembea, to Ayto Engedan, nephew to the queen-mother, and son to Kasmati Eshte, whom he himself had deposed, murdered, and succeeded in the government of Damot and Maitsha; and Sellasse

Barea, brother to Ayto Aylo, he made Palambaras. These appointments just placed the king in the difficulty that was intended; for the places had been given to Kasmati Sanuda, as a recompence for resigning the posts of Ras and Betwudet, which were now conferred upon Fasil; and Sanuda, whom Socinios believed his only friend, and the person that raised him to the throne, was now left destitute of all employment whatever, by an act of seeming ingratitude flowing from the king alone.

The next day, Fasil, pursuing the same line of conduct, appointed Adera Tacca Georgis, a creature of his own, Fit Auraris to the king. None of these preferments Socinios could be brought to comply with; so that when these noblemen came to do homage for their respective places, Socinios absolutely refused to receive them, or displace Kasmati Sanuda. This involved the king in still greater difficulties; for he thereby broke his word with Fasil, who had done nothing more than Socinios gave him authority to do. On the other hand, Selasse Barea was brother to Ayto Aylo, the queen's greatest counsellor and confident; equal to his brother both in wisdom, integrity, and riches, and in the favour of the people; but much more ambitious and desirous of governing, consequently more dangerous when disobliged.

Socinios, who did not believe that Sanuda was treacherously urging him to his ruin, continued obstinate in rejecting Fasil's appointment, and all fell immediately into confusion. Troops flocked in from every quarter, as upon a signal given. Ayto Engedan, in discontent, with a thousand men, sat down near Gondar on the river Mogetch; his brother Aylo, at Emtras, about 15 miles further, with double that number; Ayto Confu, his cousin-germ an, with about 600 horse, lay above Koscam for the protection of Ozoro.

Esther, his mother, and the Iteghe his grandmother; all were in arms, though upon the defensive*.

In this situation of things I arrived at Gondar on the 19th of November, but could not see the queen, who had retired into her apartment under pretence of devotion, but rather from disgust and melancholy, at seeing that every thing, however the contrary might be intended, seemed to conspire to bring about the return of Ras Michael, the event in the world she dreaded most. I found with Ozoro Esther the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, who, as we have already observed, had excommunicated her uncle Kasmati Eshte, and afterwards contrived his murder, and had also had a very principal share in that of Joas himself. It was he that Fasil said had sent to him to desire that I might not be allowed to proceed to the head of the Nile, and that from no other reason but a hatred to me as a Frank. We bowed to each other as two not very great friends; and he immediately began a very dry, ill-natured, admonitory discourse, addressed, for the greatest part, to Ozoro Esther, explaining to her, the mischief of suffering Franks to remain at liberty in the country and meddle in affairs. I interrupted him by a laugh, and by saying, "If it be me, father, you mean by the word Frank, I have, without your advice, gone where I intended, and returned in safety; and as for your country, I will give you a very handsome present to put me safely out of it, in any direction you please, to-morrow; the sooner the better."

At this instant Ayto Confu came into his mother's apartment, caught the last words which I had said, and asked of me, in a very angry tone of voice, "Who

* Confu, the son of Netcho and Ozoro Esther, naturally belonged to the old Queen's party; but when Michael's return became certain, he deserted Socinios her temporary king.—E.

is he that wishes you out of the country?"—"I do sincerely and heartily," said I, "for one; but what you last heard was in consequence of a friendly piece of advice that Abba Salama here has been giving me." "Father, father," says Confu, turning to him very sternly, "do you not think the measure of your good deeds is yet near full? Do you not see this place, Kasmati Eshte's house, surrounded by the troops of my father Michael, and do you still think yourself in safety, when you have so lately excommunicated both the King and Ras? Look you," says he, turning to his mother, "what dogs the people of this country are; that Pagan there, who calls himself a Christian, did charitably recommend it to Fasil to rob or murder Yagoube, a stranger offending nobody, when he got him among his Galla in Damot: This did not succeed. He then persuaded Woodage Asahel to send a party of robbers from Samseen to intercept him in Maitsha. Coque Abou Barea himself told me it was at that infidel's desire that he sent Welleta Selasse of Guesgue with a party to cut him off, who missed him narrowly at Degwassa; and all this for what? I shall swear they should not have found ten ounces of gold upon him, except Fasil's present, and that they dared not touch."—"But God," said Ozoro Esther, "saw the integrity of his heart, and that his hands were clean; and that is not the case with the men in this country."—"And therefore," said Confu, "he made Fasil his friend and protector. Woodage Asahel's party fell in with an officer of Welleta Yasous, who cut them all to pieces while robbing some Agows." Then rising up from the place where he was sitting at his mother's feet, with a raised voice, and countenance full of fury, turning to Abba Salama, he said, "And I, too, am now nobody; a boy! a child! a mockery to three such Pagan infidels as you. Fasil,

and Abou Barea, because Ras Michael is away!"—Says the Acab Saat, with great composure, or without any seeming anger, "You are excommunicated, Confu; you are excommunicated if you say I am Infidel or Pagan; I am a Christian priest."—"A priest of the devil," says Confu, in a great passion—"wine and women, gluttony, lying, and drunkenness—these are your gods! Away!" says he, putting his hand to his knife; "by Saint Michael I swear, ten days shall not pass before I teach both Coque Abou Barea and you your duty. Come, Yagoube, come and see my horses; when I have put a good man upon each of them, we shall together hunt your enemies to Sennaar." He swang hastily out of the door, and I after him, and left Abba Salama dying with fear, as Ozoro Esther told me afterwards, saying only to her, as he went out, "Remember I did not excommunicate him."

I left Confu with his men and horses; and, though it was now late, I went to the camp to pay my compliments to Fasil. Having no arms, I was very much molested, both in going and coming, under various pretences: I was afterwards kept waiting about half an hour in the camp without seeing him; he only sent me a message that he would see me on the morrow. However, we met several friends we had seen at Bamba; and from them we learned at length what we shortly had heard from Ayto Confu, that Woodage Asahel had sent a party to intercept and rob us; and it was that party which was called the five Agows, who had passed Fasil's army the night after we left Kelti*. They told us, that the Lamb said they were Agows, not to alarm us, but that he knew very well who they were, and what was their errand; and that,

* See my last journey to the fountains of the Nile.

the night after he left us, he got upon their track by information from three countrymen, whom they had robbed of some honey, surrounded them, and, in the morning, had attacked them west of Geesh, and, though inferior in number, had slain and wounded the whole party, as dexterously as he had promised to us at our last interview.

I sent a small present to our friend the Lamb, in token of gratitude to him, and delivered it to three people, that I might be sure one of them would not steal it, and took Fasil's guarantee to see it delivered; but this was upon a following day. I resolved to remain at Koscam in the house the Iteghe had given me; as it was easy to see things were drawing to a crisis, which would inevitably end in blood.

It was not till the 23d of November I first saw the Iteghe. She sent for me early in the morning, and had a large breakfast prepared. Ayto Confu and Ayto Engedan were there; she looked very much worn out, and indisposed. When I came first into her presence, I kneeled, with my forehead to the ground. She put on a very serious countenance, and, without desiring me to rise, said gravely to her people about her, "There," says she, "see that madman, who, in times like these, when we, the natives of the country, are not safe in our own houses, rashly, against all advice, runs out into the fields to be hunted like a wild beast by every robber, of which this country is full."

She then made me a sign to rise, which I did, and kissed her hand. "Madam," said I, "if I did this, it was in consequence of the good lessons your majesty deigned to give me."—"Me!" says she, with surprise, "was it I that advised you, at such a time as this, to put yourself in the way of men like Coque Abou Barea, and Woodage Asahel, to be ill-used, robbed, and probably murdered?"—"No," said I,

"Madam, you certainly never did give me such advice; but you must own, that every day I have heard you say, when you was threatened by a multitude of powerful enemies, that you was not afraid, you was in God's hands, and not in theirs. Now, Madam, Providence has hitherto protected you: I have, in humble imitation of you, had the same Christian confidence, and I have succeeded. I knew I was in God's hands, and therefore valued not the bad intentions of all the robbers in Abyssinia."—"Madam," says Ayto Confu, "is not Guesgue yours? does it pay you any thing?" "It was mine," says the queen, "while any thing was mine; but Michael took it and gave it to Coque Abou Barea, and since it has paid me nothing. Fasil has sent for him about the affair of Yagoube, as he says, and has ordered him to come in the same manner that he himself is come, in private; but forbid him to bring his army with him, in order that no means of relief may be possible to this devoted country." Large tears flowed down her venerable face at saying these words, and shewed the deep-rooted fear in her heart, that Michael's coming was decreed without possibility of prevention. "I wonder," says Ayto Engedan, laughing, to divert her, "if Coque Abou Barea is the same good Christian that you and Yagoube are; if he is not, nothing else will save him from the hands of Confu and me; for we both want horses and mules for our men, and he has good ones, and arms too, that belonged to my father."—"And both of you," says the queen, "are as bad men as either Woodage Asahel or Coque Abou Barea." At this moment the arrival of Fasil was announced, and we were all turned out, and went to breakfast. I saw him afterwards going out of the palace. He saluted me slightly, and seemed much pre-occupied in mind. He only desired me to come to Gondar next morning, and he would speak to me

about Coque Abou Barea; but this the Iteghe refused to permit me to do, so I remained at Koscam.

Fasil, although he did not deny that he had made peace with Ras Michael, yet, to quiet the minds of the people, always solemnly protested, that, so far from coming to Gondar, he never would consent to his crossing the Tacazze: and this had, with most people, the desired effect; for all Gondar loved Tecla Haimanout as much as they detested Socinios; but the bloodshed and cruelty that would certainly attend Michael's coming, made them wish for any government that would free them from the terror of that event. On the other hand, Socinios, though now perfectly persuaded of Fasil's motives, had not deserted his own cause; he had sent Woodage Asahel, fortified with all his authority, into Maitsha, in order to raise a commotion there; ordered it to be proclaimed to the whole body of Galla in that province, that if they would come to Gondar, and prevent the arrival of Ras Michael, and bring their bouco (or sceptre) along with them, they should have the election of their own governor, and not pay any thing to the king for seven years to come; and, besides, he had ordered Powussen of Begemder to endeavour, by a forced march, to surprise Fasil, then at Gondar, attended by a few troops. Mean time, he dissembled the best he could; but, as he had very shrewd people to deal with, it was more than probable his secret was early discovered.

Every hand being now armed, and all measures taken, as far as human foresight could reach, it was impossible to defer any longer the coming to blows in some part or other. On the 23d, at night, advice was received from Adera Tacca Georgis, an officer of Fasil in Maitsha, that he had attacked Woodage Asahel, who had collected a number of troops, and was endeavouring to raise commotions; and, after an ob-

stinate combat, he had defeated him, and slain or wounded most of his followers: that Asahel himself, wounded twice with a lance, had, by the goodness of his horse, escaped, and joined Powussen in Begemder.

These news occasioned Fasil to throw off the mask: he now publicly avowed it was his intention to restore Tecla Haimanout to the throne and that, rather than fail in it, he would replace Ras Michael in all his posts and dignities. He said that Socinios was created for mockery only; and publicly asserted, that he was not son of Yasous, but of one Mercurius, a private man at Degwassa: And, indeed, he bore not, in his features or carriage, any resemblance to the royal family, from which he pretended to be descended.

Socinios now saw that he was henceforward to look upon Fasil as an enemy. Orders were accordingly given to shut the gates of the palace, and to station a number of troops in the different courts and avenues leading to the king's apartment. No person was to be admitted to the king without examination. The drums were beat, and constant guard kept; and three hundred Mahometans taken into his service as musketeers; a measure that gave great offence.

Fasil had taken up his residence in the house which belonged to the office of Ras, at the other end of the town; and, to shew his contempt for the king, was very slightly guarded, his army remaining encamped under the palace. One thing at this time seemed particularly remarkable; a drum was heard to beat in the house where Fasil was; whereas it is an invariable rule, that no drum is suffered to beat in the capital any where but in the house where the king resides. It was said, that king Yasous, son to the Iteghe, or queen-mother, and father to Joas, had left two sons by a slave of the queen's; indeed he had so many by

low people, that very little care was taken of them, not even that of sending them to the mountain Wechne. One of these, after the murder of Joas, had appeared in Gojam resolved to try his fortune; but he was apprehended by the governor of that province, sent to Gondar, and then to Wechne. It was said the other was with Fasil in Gondar; that the drum that then beat in Fasil's house announced his speedy intention of making him king. All was confusion within the palace, but the Ras kept up a strict police in the town.

It was then towards the end of November, when, by mediation of the Abuna, the queen, and the Itchegue, peace was unexpectedly made between Socinios and Fasil; the latter swearing allegiance to Socinios as to his only sovereign, and the Abuna pronouncing excommunication upon either of them which should become the enemy of the other. What was the intention of this farce I never yet could learn; for the very next day Fasil deprived Gusho and Powussen of their governments of Amhara and Begemder, which was an express proof that his intention still was to restore Tecla Haimanout. The doors of the king's palace were again immediately shut, and signs of hostilities commenced as before.

I was dining with Ozoro Esther, when a messenger arrived from Coque Abou Barea with a complaint to the queen, that he was on his march to Gondar, to pay his allegiance to Socinios, and bring him the tribute of his province, when he received a message from Fasil to return the greatest part of his troops; but that, desiring to be as useful as possible in preventing the coming of Michael, he so far disobeyed that order, as to bring with him a considerable body of the best of his soldiers, sending the rest home under the conduct of Welleta Selasse; but that on the 26th, early in the morning, he had been surprised by Confu and Enge-

dan, who, without any cause alleged, had killed and dispersed all his troops, and taken from them all the horses and mules they could lay their hands on: that they after followed Welleta Selasse, and had come up with him unawares, just as he entered Guesgue, had defeated him, and that Ayto Engedan, in the beginning of the fight, had slain him with his own hand, by wounding him in the throat with a lance, when stretching out his hand to parley; after which, they had set fire to nine villages in Guesgue, and given the plunder to their soldiers.

In the mean time Powussen had not disregarded the request of Socinios. He had attempted to surprise Fasil, but could not pass Aylo, who was at Emfras, without falling upon him first, which he did, dispersing his troops with little resistance. Upon the first intelligence of this, Fasil proclaimed Tecla Haimanout king; and, striking his tents, sat down at Abba Samuel, a collection of villages about two miles from Gondar, inviting all people, that would escape the vengeance of Ras Michael, to come and join him, and leave Gondar. From this he retreated near to Dingleber, on the side of the lake, and intercepted all provisions coming to Gondar, which occasioned a very great famine, and many poor people died.

Hitherto I had no intercourse with Socinios, never having been in his presence, but when the Galla, the murderer of Joas, was tried; nor had I any reason to think he knew me, or cared for me more than any Greek that was in Gondar; but I had a good friend at court, who waked when I slept, and did not suffer me to pass unknown; this was the Acab Saat, Salama, who had instigated the king, on the 5th of December, in one of his druken fits, to set out from the palace in the night, attended by a number of banditti, mostly Mahometans, to plunder several houses; he slew one

man, as it was said, with his own hand: among these devoted houses mine happened to be one, but I was then happily at Koscam. The next was Metical Aga's, one of whose servants escaped into a church-yard, the other being slain. The leader of this unworthy mob was Confu, brother to Guebra Mehedin. Every thing that could be carried away was stolen or broken; among which was a reflecting telescope, a barometer, and thermometer; a great many papers and sketches of drawings, first torn, then burnt by Confu's own hand, with many curses and threats against me.

The next day, about nine o'clock, I had a message to come to the palace, where I went, and was immediately admitted. Socinios was sitting, his eyes half closed, red as scarlet with last night's debauch; he was apparently at that moment much in liquor; his mouth full of tobacco, squirting his spittle out of his mouth to a very great distance; with this he had so covered the floor, that it was with very great difficulty I could choose a clean place to kneel, and make my obeisance. He was dressed like the late king; but, in every thing else, how unlike! My mind was filled with horror and detestation, to see the throne on which he sat so unworthily occupied. I regarded him as I advanced with the most perfect contempt: Hamlet's lines described him exactly:—

> A murtherer and a villain;
> A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
> Of your preceding lord; a vice of kings;
> A cutpurse of the empire, and the rule,
> That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
> And put it in his pocket;
> A king of shreds and patches.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

It requires something of innate royalty to personate a king.

When I got up and stood before him, he seemed to be rather disconcerted, and not prepared to say any thing to me. There were few people there besides servants, most men of consideration having left Gondar, and gone with Fasil. After two or three squirts through his teeth, and a whisper from his brother Chremation, whom I had never before seen—"Wherefore is it," says he, that you, who are a great man, do not attend the palace? you were constantly with Tecla Haimanout, the exile, or usurper, in peace and war; you used to ride with him, and divert him with your tricks on horseback, and, I believe, ate and drank with him. Where is all that money you got from Ras el Feel, of which province, I am told, you are still governor, though you conceal it? How dare you keep Yasine in that government, and not allow Abd el Jellcel, who is my slave, appointed to enter and govern that province?" I waited patiently till he had said all he had to say, and made a slight inclination of the head. I answered, "I am no great man, even in my own country; one proof of this is my being here in yours. I arrived in the time of the late king, and I was recommended to him by his friends in Arabia. You are perfectly well informed as to the great kindness he did all along shew me, but this was entirely from his goodness, and no merit of mine. I never did eat or drink with him; it was an honour I could not have been capable of aspiring to. Custom has established the contrary; and for me, I saw no pleasure or temptation to transgress this custom, though it had been in my option, as it was not. I have, for the most part, seen him eat and drink; an honour I enjoyed in common with his confidential servants, as being an officer of his household. The gold you mention, which I have several times got from the late King and Ras el Feel, I constantly spent for his service, and for

my own honour. But at present I am neither governor of Ras el Feel, nor have I any post under heaven, nor do I desire it. Yasine, I suppose, holds his from Ayto Confu, his superior, who holds it from the king by order of Ras Michael; but of this I know nothing. As for tricks on horseback, I know not what you mean. I have for many years been in constant practice of horsemanship among the Arabs. Mine too, is a country of horsemen; and I profess to have attained to a degree not common, the management both of the lance and of fire-arms; but I am no buffoon, to shew tricks. The profession of arms is my birthright, derived from my ancestors; and with these, at his desire, I have often diverted the king, as an amusement worthy of him, and by no means below me."—"The king!" says he in a violent passion, "and who then am I? a slave! Do you know, with a stamp of my foot I can order you to be hewn in pieces in an instant? You are a Frank, a dog, a liar, and a slave! Why did you tell the Iteghe that your house was robbed of 50 ounces of gold? Any other king but myself would order your eyes to be pulled out in a moment, and your carcase to be thrown to the dogs."

What he said was true; bad kings have most executioners. I was not, however dismayed; I was in my own mind, stranger and alone, superior to such a beast upon the throne. "The Iteghe," said I, "is at present at Koscam, and will inform you if I told her of any gold that was stolen from me, except a gold-mounted knife *, which the late king gave me at

* These knives are called wers shotel; and, like the gold chain, make part of the full dress given, by way of honour, to principal officers and kasmatis.—E.

Dingleber, the day after the battle of Limjour, and which was accidentally left in my house, as I had not worn it since he went to Tigre." He squirted at this moment an arch of tobacco-spittle towards me, whether on purpose or not I do not know. I felt myself very much moved; it narrowly missed me. At this instant an old man, of a noble appearance, who sat in a corner of the room next him, got up, and, in a firm tone of voice, said, "I can bear this no longer; we shall become a proverb, and the hatred of all mankind. What have you to do with Yagoube, or why did you send for him? he was favoured by the late king, but not more than I have seen Greeks or Armenians in all the late reigns; and yet these very people confess, in their own country, they are not worthy of being his servants. He is a friend, not only to the king, but to us all: the whole people love him. As for myself, I never spoke to him twice before; when he might have gone to Tigre with Michael, his friend, he staid at Gondar with us: so you, of all others, have least reason to complain of him, since he has preferred you to the Ras, though you have given him nothing. As for riding, I wish Yagoube had just rode with you as much as with Tecla Haimanout, and you spent as much time with him as your predecessor did; last night's disgrace would not then have fallen upon us, at least would have been confined to the limits of your own kingdom; you would have neither disobliged Fasil nor the Iteghe; and, when the day of trial is at hand, you would have been better able to answer it, than, by going on at this rate, there is any appearance you will be." This person, I understood afterwards, was Ras Senuda, nephew to the Iteghe, and son of Ras Welled de l'Oul; he had been banished to Kuara in the late king's time, so I had no opportunity of knowing him.

All the time of this harangue Socinios's eyes were mostly shut, and his mouth open, and slavering tobacco; he was rolling from side to side, scarcely preserving his equilibrium. When Sanuda stopt, he began with an air of drollery, "You are very angry to-day, Baba." And turning to me, said, "To-morrow, see you bring me that horse which Yasine sent you to Koscam; and bring me Yasine himself, or you will hear of it; slave and Frank as you are, enemy to Mary the Virgin, bring me the horse!" Sanuda took me by the hand, saying, in a whisper, "Don't fear him, I am here; but go home; next time you come here you will have horses enough along with you." He, too, seemed in liquor; and, making me a sign to withdraw, I left the king and his minister together with great willingness, and returned to Koscam to the Iteghe, to whom I told what had passed, and who ordered me to stay near Ozoro Esther, as in her service, and go no more to the palace.

At this time certain intelligence was received that Ras-Michael was arrived in Lasta with Guigarr, Shum, or chief of the clan called Waag, once a mortal enemy to Michael, though now at peace with him, and serving him as his conductor. Through his country is the only passage from Tigre to Begemder and Belessen, and many armies have perished by endeavouring to force it. Michael and the king now passed under the protection of Guigarr, notwithstanding Powussen had many parties among the other clans that wished to prevent him. On the 15th of December he forded the Tacazze, and turned a little to the left, as if he intended to pass through the middle of Begemder, though he had really no such design, but only to bring Powussen to an engagement. Seeing this was not likely, and only tended to waste time, he pursued his journey straight towards Gondar, not in his usual

way, burning and destroying, but quietly, correcting abuses, and regulating the police of the country through which he passed, for he was yet in fear.

The news of his having passed the Tacazze determined Socinios, and the Iteghe to fly; and they set out accordingly. Socinios directed his flight first towards Begemder, but, the next day, turned to the right, through Dembea, and joined the queen at Axazo, where great altercations and disputes followed between them. The queen had engaged the Abuna to attend her, and that prelate had consented, upon receiving fifteen mules and thirty ounces of gold, which were paid accordingly: But when the queen sent, the morning of her departure, to put the Abuna in mind of his promise, his servants stoned the Iteghe's messenger, without suffering him to approach the house, but they kept the mules and the gold. The queen continued her flight to Degwassa, near the lake Tzana, and sent all that was valuable that she had brought with her into the island of Dek.

Ayto Engedan and Confu were at hand at the head of large parties scouring the country, at once protecting the Iteghe, and securing as many of those of Socinios's people as were thought worthy of punishment. Samuda, too, was in arms; and, throwing off the mask, was now acting under the immediate direction of Ras Michael, and had apprehended many of those noblemen of Tigre who had revolted against the Ras, particularly Guebra Denghel, married to Ras Michael's grand daughter, descended from one of the noblest houses in the province, and a man particularly distinguished for generosity, openness, and affability of manners; and Sebaat Laab and Kefla Mariam, men of great consideration in Michael's province. Confu and Samuda having joined, entered Gondar, and took possession of the king's house, and put a stop to the

excesses and robberies, which had become very frequent since the Iteghe's flight.

One day, while I was sitting at Koscam, Yasine entered the court before the house, and, coming into the room, fell down and kissed the ground before me, after the manner they salute their superior. He told me he came from Ayto Confu, who ordered him to do homage to me as usual for the province of Ras el Feel, and that I was to come to him directly, and go out to meet the king, for several of his people were already arrived at Gondar. I sent him back to Ayto Confu with my respectful thanks; declined accepting of any office till I should see the king; and, as he himself had named the place to be Mariam Ohha, I thought it was my duty to stay till he came there.

In the mean time the unfortunate Socinios continued his flight, in company with the queen, till they came to the borders of Kuara, her native country. Those who made Socinios a king had never made him a friend. It was here suggested, that his presence would infallibly occasion a pursuit which might endanger the queen, her country, and all her friends. Upon this it was resolved to abandon the unworthy Socinios to the soldiers, who stripe him naked, giving him only a rag to cover him, and a good horse, and with these they dismissed him to seek his fortune.

After a short stay in Kuara, the queen turned to the left towards Bure. All Maitsha assembled to escort her to Fasil, while he led her through Damot to the frontiers of Gojam, where she was received in triumph by her daughter Ozoro Welleta Israel, and Aylo her grandson, to whom half of that province belonged, and with them she rested at last in safety, after a long and anxious journey.

On the 21st of December a message came to me from Ozoro Esther, desiring I would attend her son

Confu to meet the king, as his Fit-Auraris had marked out the camp at Mariam-Ohha. Observing that I had a very indifferent knife, or dagger, in my girdle (that which I had received from the king being stolen, when my house was plundered), with her own hands she made me a present of a magnificent one, mounted with gold, which she had chosen with that intention, and laid upon the seat beside her. She told me she had already sent to acquaint her husband, Ras Michael, how much she had been obliged to me in his absence, both for my attention to her and her eldest son, who had been several times sick since his departure, and that I might expect to receive a kind reception.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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